February / March 1996 $4.95

The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

Winnipeg's North End

Camels in the Cariboo

The Great Fire of Ottawa

MUSEUM PROFILE

THE YARMOUTH COUNTY MUSEUM is a "cabinet of curiosities"- an old fashioned style museum with a warm and friendly atmosphere. Situated in a former late-nineteenth century church, the museum holds the history of the Yarmouth, Nova Scotia region – an area which in the 1850-1890 era was home to one of Canada's's largest fleets of sailing vessels that traded around the world. Families brought home souvenirs from exotic countries, clothes from Europe and ideas from everywhere. The museum's collections reflect these prosperous times and the shipping background which produced them.

Period rooms depict life of the late Victorian age, a stage coach and an electric car illustrate transportation while the collection of ship portraits (the third largest in Canada) emphasize the seafaring history of Yarmouth County. Dominating all the artifacts is a 1908, made in Paris, Fresnel lighthouse lens which came from the light at the entrance to Yarmouth Harbour.

Contained in the Archives, which is an integral part of the museum complex, is the documentary history of the county including photographs, diaries, newspapers, ledgers, manuscripts, logbooks and miscellaneous papers – not forgetting the genealogical material that is so much a part of a growing industry

The Yarmouth County museum has both, national and international awards for its collections and exhibitions.

Interior view of the Yarmouth County Museum with its hull-like wooden ceiling and the dominating feature of the lighthouse lens.

Yarmouth County Museum and Historical Research Library
22 Collins Street
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada B5A 3C8
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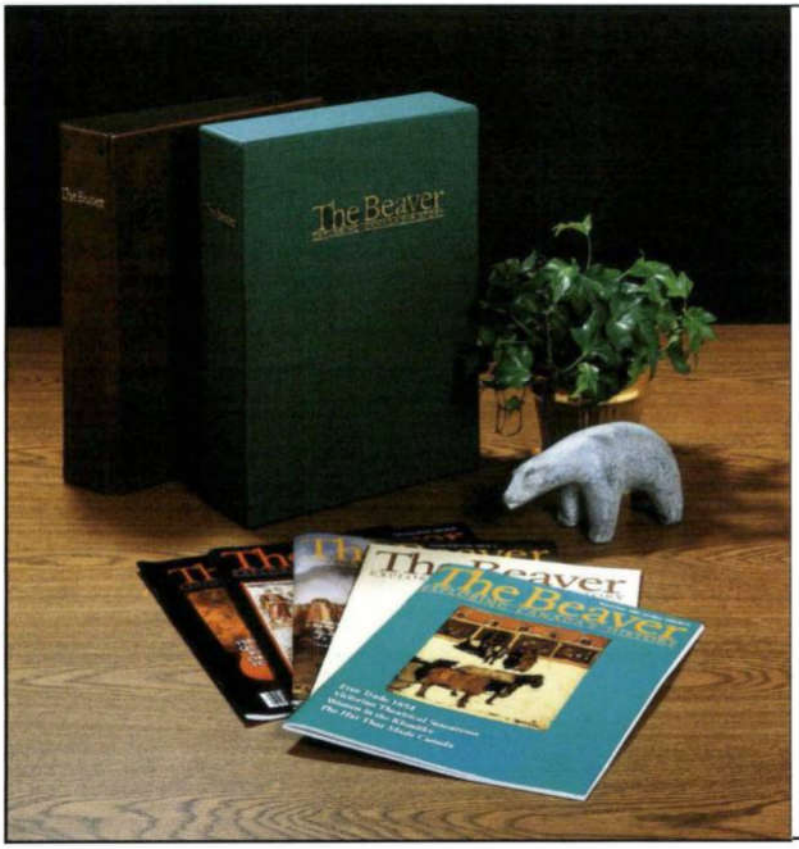

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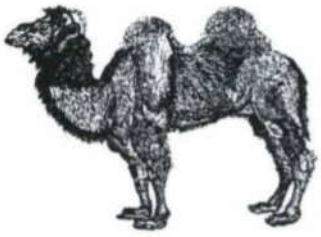

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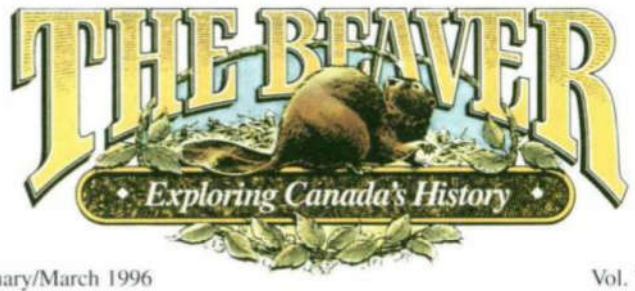

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"Blocking Traffic" by Armand Paquette.
Courtesy Loch & Mayberry Fine Art, Winnipeg.

Christopher Dafoe

Loving Canada, Then and Now

To step into a time machine and journey back a century is to step into another Canada, another world. The world of the late nineteenth century, as revealed in the yellowing pages of *The Dominion Illustrated* and *The Canadian Magazine*, was familiar to our grandparents or great-grandparents, but from our vantage point a century on the Canada that was is only dimly recognized.

Has the country changed that much? Have we changed that much? It appears that we have. Let us pay a brief visit to *terra incognita* and find out.

The Dominion Illustrated, A Canadian Pictorial Weekly, was "entered according to an act of Parliament of Canada in the year 1889 by G.E. Desbarats and Sons, at the Department of Agriculture". In those far-off days Canadian literary matters were considered part of the area of jurisdiction of the agriculture department — and why not? Canadian literature was in its bovine period to some extent, as a poem by Charles G.D. Roberts published by the *Dominion Illustrated* in February 1889 indicates. A small taste of *Canadians Are We* should be enough to bring on the scent of the cowshed:

"Dominion is to us from Columbia's shores of balm/To the shouting tides of Acadie,/From the laughing waves of Erie to the Arctic fields of calm —— /For Canadians — Canadians are we!"

The Dominion Illustrated kept Canadians in touch with the great issues of the day as well as with the small events of the passing parade. The "Personal Column" for February, 1889, records, for example, the dismal news that "Pellegrini, the famous caricaturist, is dead." Readers were also informed that Mr. Sanford Fleming had been elected chancellor of Queen's University for the fourth time.

An earlier "Personal Column" informed readers that "a fine bust of the late 'Chinese' Gordon has just been placed in the private apartments at Windsor Castle. It stands near the crystal casket in which Queen Victoria deposited General Gordon's *Bible*."

The same personal column noted the deaths of two worthies: "Two of the old landmarks have gone to the majority says the Lake Megantic correspondent of the *Sherbrooke Gazette* — Mrs. Alexander McLeod, of Winslow, and Mrs. George Stewart of Marsbro. They were both buried on the 2nd. Mrs. McLeod was one of the pioneers of Lingwick and was the mother of Rev. Finlay McLeod of Manitoba. It may well be said of her that she was a mother in Israel; she had the Old and the New Testaments committed to memory, and although blind for several years she could repeat any chapter of the *Bible* without mistake."

Illustrated papers such as *The Dominion Illustrated* enjoyed a popularity similar to that enjoyed by local television stations today, and the custom of publishing engravings of celebrated persons made people in the hinterland feel in touch with events in the great cities of Montreal and Toronto. A handsome engraving of a picture of the Honourable Alexander Mackenzie, Leader of the Liberal Party, on the frontispiece of the April 1889 edition might provide many rural Canadians with their only notion of what the great man looked like.

The jokes of Victorian Canada may seem strained to us today, but they give us a glimpse of one aspect of life as it was lived and enjoyed by our great-grandparents. A typical example from February 1889:

> **Aspiring Author:** Of course you are fond of poetry, are you not, Miss Whipperly?
> **Miss Whipperly:** My maid is, I believe; but let us talk of something serious; tell me all about the entries for the Rensselaer Kennel Club dog show next month.

Advertisements in *The Dominion Illustrated* helped our forebears part with their money in a variety of agreeable and interesting ways. Canadian Pacific offered cheap excursions to exotic places: "Manitoba, the North West, British Columbia and the Pacific Coast". Those interested in taking the trip into the frontier regions were reminded that there would be "No customs delay or expense. No Quarantine. No Transfers." Indeed, it was all a part of the greater Dominion of Canada and there were friendly Indians!

In another advertisement, A. Norman of 4 Queen Street East, Toronto, offered Canadians a certain cure for nervous debility:

> Sciatica, Neuralgia, Catarrh, Indigestion, Rheumatism and all Nervous Diseases are immediately relieved and permanently cured by Norman's Electro-Curative Belts, which are warranted to be the best in the world. Consultation and catalogue free. Batteries, Suspensories, Shoulder Braces and Crutches kept in stock.

The 8 June 1889 issue offered something for every-

body, including engravings of the handsome new lunatic asylum at London, Ontario; a portrait of the Honourable Mr. Dewdney's dog "Bernard" and a multi-social group posed outside the Hudson's Bay Company post at Whitefish Lake.

The Victorians were interested in everything and the illustrated papers gave them what they wanted. If it was decent and uplifting they printed it.

The Dominion Illustrated catered to the family market. *The Canadian Magazine*, which incorporated *Massey's Magazine*, dedicated its columns to the Canadian intelligentsia and those seeking self-improvement.

Following the lead of American models such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine*, a typical issue of *The Canadian Magazine* contained a short story, several poems, an art column, political articles, a travel story, book reviews, a sports report, an item of interest to women and an essay on some great matter of the day.

The issue for January 1898, for example, leads off with an article called "Canada's Share in Imperial Defence", by Captain C.F. Winter of the Governor-General's Foot Guards. Captain Winter urged Canadians to do their part in defence of the greatest empire the world had ever known. "Nothing," he loyally noted, "could be more hearty than the welcome given to the military representatives of the Colonies at the recent Jubilee ... "

In another article in the January issue Arnold Haultain M.A. tied himself in knots discussing Sir William Dawson's attempt to reconcile the existence of fossils to Christian belief.

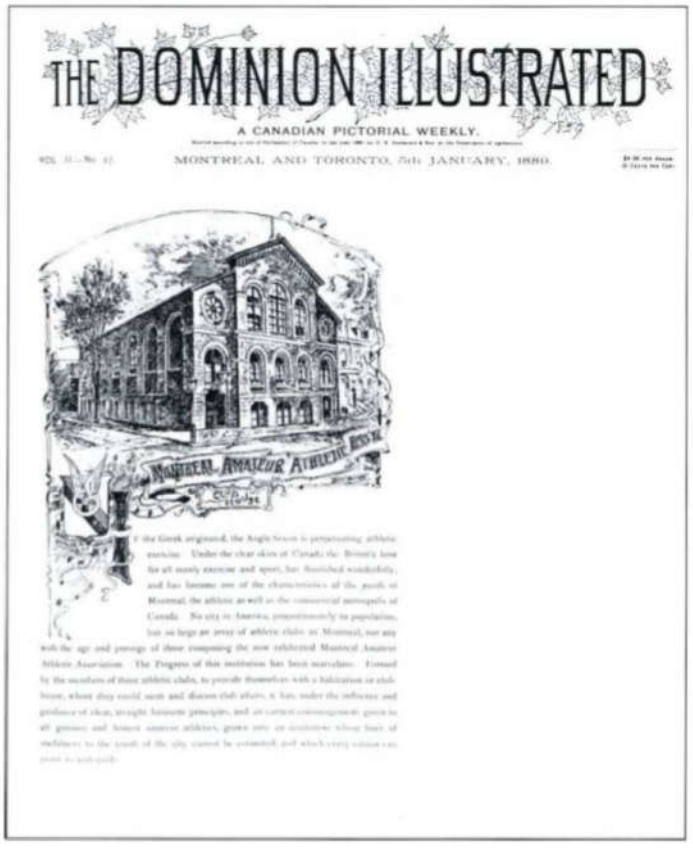
An earnest essay on the explorers of New France by Dr. J.G. Bourniot was followed by a racy story of adventure on the Canadian plains, *Calamity's Girl-Child* by Irving Claxton. The story got off to a rollicking start with the following exchange:

> "By Jove, boys!" said young Travers in enthusiastic tones, as he joined a knot of men chatting in the hall at Mrs. Price-Willoughby's reception, "I have unearthed a veritable Venus."
> "Where, Jemmy?" asked one.
> "Saw her talking to that English baronet in the conservatory just now ... "

This was Assiniboia in the golden age of Canadian culture, as presided over by the Federal Department of Agriculture.

On the opinion page for January 1898 the editor noted, as editors have been doing from 1867 to the present day, that the nation stood at a crossroads. "As the year 1898 dawns upon us we have a chance to arouse ourselves, take courage again, and gird us for the fight."

As Canadians of 1996 "gird themselves for the fight" to save the country and steer it past the treacherous crossroads at which it now finds itself, they should recall that we have passed this way before. The landscape and the emphasis may have changed, but in 1996, as in 1898, we are talking about survival and a New Canada. ◆

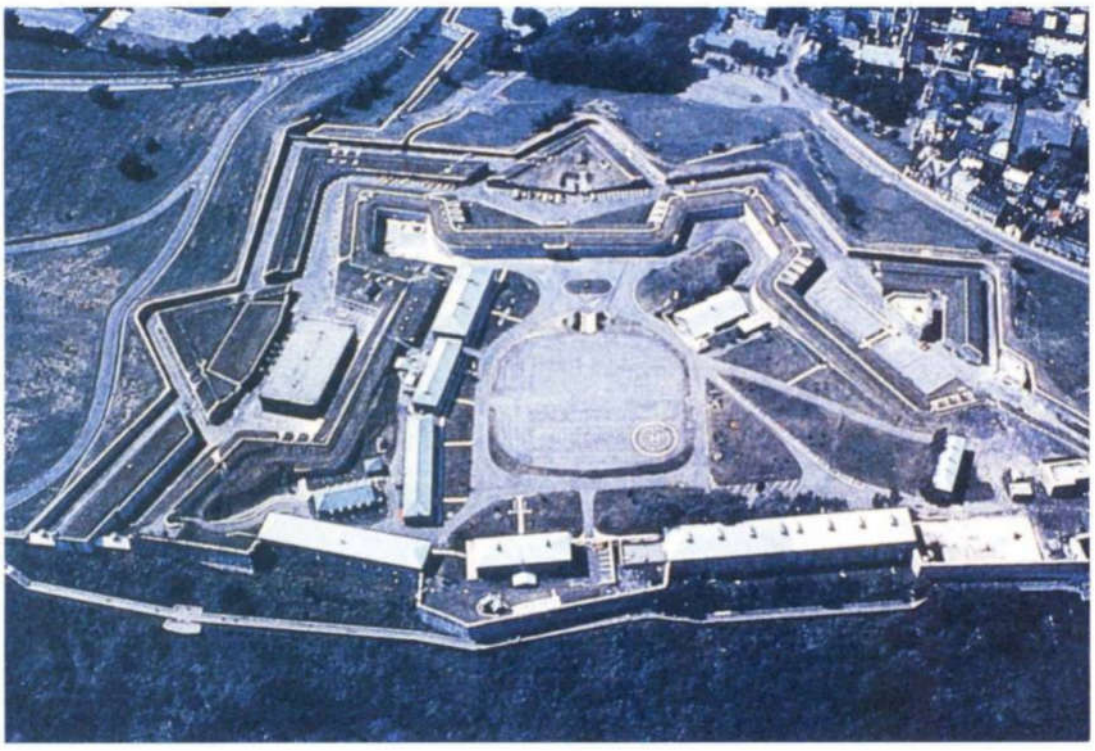

THE DOMINION ILLUSTRATED
A CANADIAN PICTORIAL WEEKLY.
MONTREAL AND TORONTO, 5th JANUARY, 1880.
MONTREAL AMATEUR ATHLETIC ASSN.

'The Honour of the Country'

The Iron Duke, Quebec and the Questionable Defence of British North America

By IAN McCULLOCH

"It is impossible for His Majesty's Government to withdraw from these Dominions. Whether valuable or otherwise which can scarcely be a question, the Honour of the Country would require that they should be defended in War...."
– Duke of Wellington, 1826



Most Canadians probably don't realize that the Duke of Wellington was perhaps the most influential person involved in the defence of Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century, though the hero of Waterloo never set a foot ashore in North America. The Iron Duke, or "Old Nosey" as his soldiers affectionately called him, was instrumental in the plans that saw the construction of the Quebec and Halifax Citadels as well as the building of the Rideau Canal.

One particular Canadian fortress that became closely associated with his most famous defensive victory of the Peninsular Campaign of the Napoleonic Wars was Quebec. Right up until 1865, the French and British fortifications of New France's capital city were being referred to as the "Torres Vedras of Canada", a reference to the then Sir Arthur Wellesley's brilliant use of defensive lines against the French army during the 1810-11 campaign in Portugal just outside Lisbon.

The Royal Navy, which had mastery of the seas, supplied the Duke of Wellington's army with ease through the port city of Lisbon to the rear of the Torres Vedras lines. Over the course of a dreadful Portuguese winter, British troops and their allies had watched French troops encamped before their well-appointed winter encampments slowly starve to death as the besiegers' extended lines of communications and supply were constantly cut and menaced by a very active and hostile populace. No doubt British planners wished to keep this image of the great man's victory alive in everyone's mind, especially the Americans and the Canadians, when it came to the thorny problem of defending Canada.

The Citadel at Quebec, with its outlying fortification system (martello towers and redoubts), came about as the result of two main military postulates that shaped Canada's overall defence system: the unquestioned supremacy of British seapower, and the required presence in Canada of a respectable force of regular troops, (the latter usually averaging the strength of the U.S. regular army, and through desertion, acting as a modest contributor to its ranks).

National Portrait Gallery

The Duke of Wellington: Concern from afar.

The first allowed Britain to bring its industrial strength and military manpower directly to bear as far as the Lachine Rapids at Montreal, though with some limitations based on the sheer size of the colony's geography and its winter climate. The second provided a nucleus of well-trained troops to instruct the colonial militia units and to take the brunt of any initial American attack, and if circumstances permitted, to lead the colonial

Martello tower number one sits on the river side of the Plains of Abraham.
Opposite page: Durnford's Citadel (1820-1831) seen in a present-day photograph from the air.
It serves as headquarters for the Royal 22nd Regiment, the "Vandoos".

"From the mouths of my cannon": Quebec in Frontenac's day.

levies in the field. This second mainstay of the defence system — the British regular — in C.P. Stacey's words would "not only stiffen the raw brigades of ploughboys, but [provide] leadership, professional and technical skills, and costly equipment and armament." Given recommendations of the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Richmond for the defence of Canada in 1818-19 one might also add the fortifications at Quebec, Halifax and Kingston as defensive mainstays, as well as the improvements to the country's interior lines of communications such as the Rideau Canal.

Yet, only six years after the American Civil War, Quebec lost its Imperial fortress status and the British "legions" departed in 1871. Only a small rump was left at Halifax (and later, at Esquimalt). Three newly-completed casemated redoubts at Point Levis on the south shore, built to protect the port and anchorage from a potential land attack (and at great expense to the British taxpayer) were handed over to the Canadian government which promptly ignored them.

This *volte face* on Quebec's importance as a strategic city bears closer examination and raises several interesting questions. Were British planners and engineers ever really seriously committed to protecting the city and port from American land attack, given that Point Levis (where Wolfe and Colonel Williamson's smooth-bore artillery of the eighteenth century had battered the lower docks and upper city into rubble) had been left undefended until the year before the British departure? Perhaps the fortifications at Quebec were of a more subtle and insidious utility as some French-Canadian historians have suggested — their purpose really being to awe a conquered populace who might rise up in rebellion? Or were the fortifications just so much window dressing on the part of a proud imperial power, a desire to provide some visible manifestation of their resolve to defend an indefensible country — in effect, a nineteenth-century version of a confidence building measure for its non-participatory and sometimes unappreciative colonial subjects?

What, then, were the fortifications of Quebec really needed for when all is said and done? Were they ever really a pragmatic, utilitarian defensive system or merely an expensive, highly visible strategic pawn in Britain's evolving imperial defence policy? A closer examination of the fortifications of Quebec and the man behind their planning, the Duke of Wellington, can provide us with some interesting answers.

From the conclusion of the War of 1812 to the Treaty of Washington in 1871, Britain and the United States were constantly at diplomatic loggerheads over international issues, in some cases almost to the point of unseemly fisticuffs. Some confrontations concerned Britain's North American colonies while others were direct Anglo-American disputes, the latter just as serious, however, as Canada was readily available as a proxy battlefield.

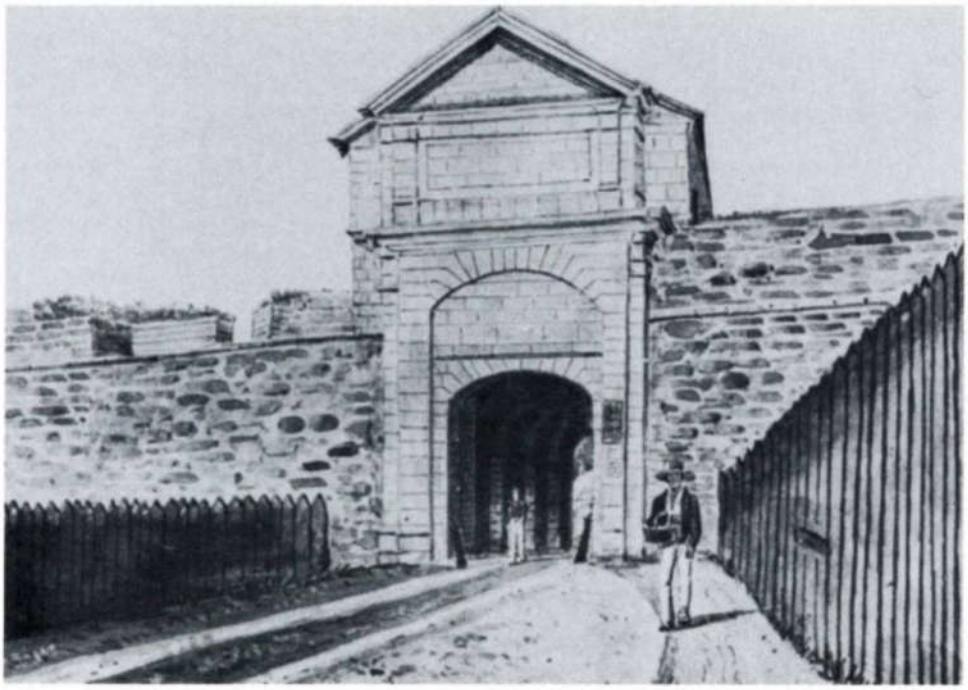
All British strategic planning for the defence of

Canada had to take into consideration that, in the event of any hostilities with the United States, the Americans' primary mission would be the invasion and conquest of Canada. By 1815, Canada was Britain's most important colony with the exception of India, a special case in its own right, with its own special defensive problems given the Afghans and the common border with Russia. The Canadian region, consisting of Upper and Lower provinces until 1841, and a united one thereafter, had the largest economy, largest population, and thus presented the biggest problems for the Imperial government.

"The Province of Canada," states one historian, "was the only British colony beyond the protective reach of the Royal Navy," primarily because of Canada's unique geography. All of Canada was landlocked in winter, and the western half beyond Montreal was landlocked all year round. The War of 1812 had effectively shown both antagonists that while Britain held the initiative along the American eastern seaboard through their naval superiority, the Americans held the initiative along the Canadian border with easy access to the colony's vulnerable lines of communications.

The Duke of Wellington admitted after the war that he was "astonished that the [British] officers of the army and navy in [Canada] were able to defend those colonies during the last war, and I can attribute their having been able to defend them as they did only to the inexperience of the officers of the United States in the operations of war; and possibly likewise to the difficulty they must have found stationing their forces as they ought to have done, upon the right bank of the St. Lawrence." Wellington and other leaders of like opinion knew that their American counterparts were fully aware of their previous mistakes and did not intend to repeat them.

The Quebec Citadel, a prime example of British strategic planning and imperial policy, was begun in 1820, more than half a century after the British Conquest of 1760. Pre-conquest, the fortifications of Quebec had first grown up as rude but effective defences against the Iroquois; then, latterly, English freebooters after furs. As New England and New France began to compete for hegemony over the rich hinterlands of North America, however, the need for more enduring, formal European fortifications grew, a need never successfully addressed by the French. C.P. Stacey writes that "the story of the city walls of Quebec is a truly extraordinary record of sustained inefficiency; and it tells a good deal about the administration of New France". The western defences of the city were never successfully tackled by French engineers who, "each noisily vilifying his predecessor, and each himself spending great sums of public money to very little purpose, tinkered ineffectively with the problem of fortifying Quebec".



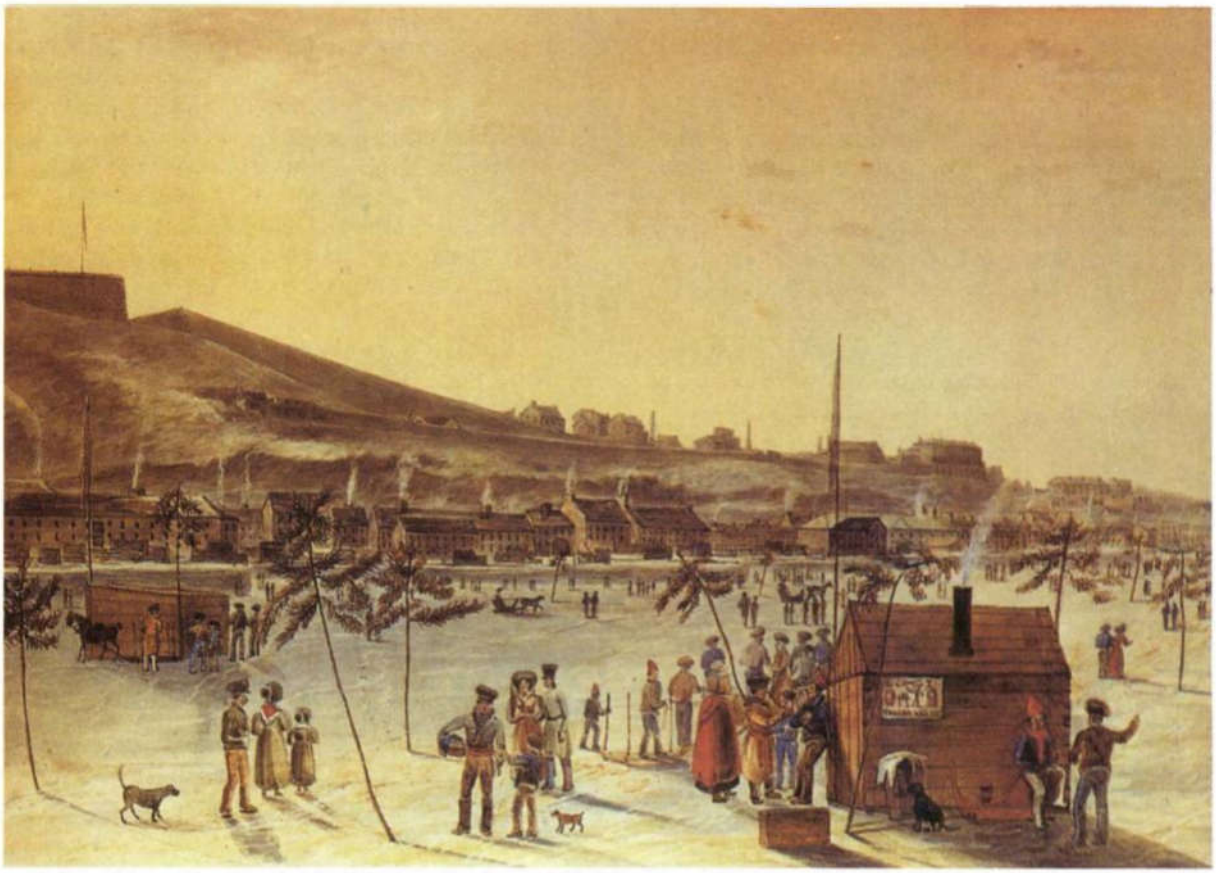
Archives of the Seminary of Quebec

The old St. Louis Gate, Quebec, demolished in 1871. From a watercolour by James Cockburn, 1830s.

French officers such as Colonel de Bougainville wrote on the eve of General Wolfe's siege and attack of 1759 that the fortifications were useless:

> Quebec is without fortifications and is not capable of being fortified; if we cannot hold the approaches to it there is nothing for it but to lay down our arms. If the enemy once reaches the foot of [our] walls, we must capitulate.

Montcalm's own journal uses similar terms: the



Royal Ontario Museum

A frost fair on the "ice bridge" before Quebec, 1830. The Upper Town and the Citadel rise above the smoking chimneys of the Lower Town. Watercolour by James Cockburn.

city's fortifications are "so ridiculous and so bad that it would be taken as soon as besieged!" The French general's opinion of the King's Engineer is scathing when he says "You only need look at his works to know he robbed the King like the others".

The construction of the Citadel in 1820 by the British therefore was belated recognition that the defences of a key city had been woefully neglected before, during and after the two preceding wars with the American colonies and latterly, the United States. By 1820, in addition to the existing French fortifications which had been marginally improved by British engineers since the Conquest, four martello towers had been built across the Plains of Abraham during the War of 1812 to provide early warning on the west side of the city. Some counterguards and a ravelin (outwork of fortification with two faces) had been thrown up as well to protect the central portion of the free-standing and exposed city walls.

Work on the Citadel proper, as well as many reinforcements and improvements to the existing French fortifications, commenced in May 1820 under the supervision of Lieutenant-Colonel E.W. Durnford, Royal Engineers. Durnford, who stayed on site for eleven years and saw the project through to completion, was technically competent. As C.P. Stacey has noted: "Durnford proved to be a skilful builder but his abilities as an estimator left a lot to be desired. His original estimate of the cost of the Citadel was 70,000 pounds. The Defence Commission which visited Canada in 1825 reported that it was about 1/3 completed and had so far cost 60,374 pounds." Carmichael-Smythe's Commission, which had been sent expressly by Wellington to report back on progress of his fortification schemes, also reported that "an additional sum of 150,000 pounds has been estimated by Colonel Durnford as necessary to finish the work", the ultimate cost in 1831 being 236,540 pounds, a cost overrun of more than two hundred percent.

It was the staggering cost of the Citadel combined with the even more staggering cost of the Rideau Canal finished a year later (one million pounds) that brought about a strong reluctance on the part of the British Government to allow any more money to be spent on Wellington's proposed fortifications in Canada. These high costs were partially incurred because there was no direct supervision or accountability in the Ordnance Department. As Master-General, Ordnance was Wellington's private domain which he steadfastly protected from political and army reformers. No one inside or outside the organization had the temerity to question

Wellington's judgement or actions directly and the grand old man was considered to be the "highest military authority" in the land until he went to the grave in 1852.

The Ordnance Department which has been described as "an anomaly in a changing empire, paternal in attitude", and "out of touch" with those it was supposed to serve, executed as much of their Master-General's plan as was physically possible. After Wellington stood down in 1831, the year of the Citadel's completion, the Department found itself increasingly isolated in the years that followed, and funding was very difficult to obtain to carry out any additional fortification tasks.

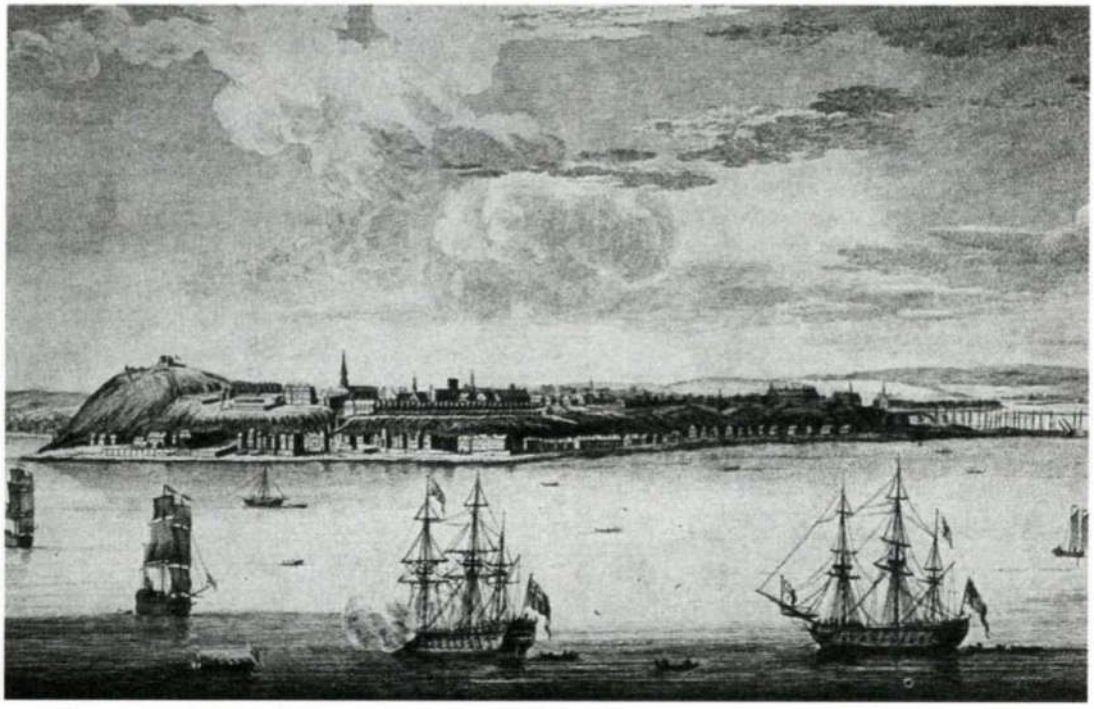
Quebec's planned fortifications by 1831 were thus completed with the construction of a new Citadel and a strengthening of existing walls but, because of prohibitive costs, much needed outerworks such as some type of fortification on Point Levis to protect the Port and Basin anchorage from southern land attack would not become a reality for another 40 years. During those years many technological advances which necessitated new forms of fortifications took place but were ignored in Canada.

By the Crimean War, it was evident to all military powers that rifled artillery, steam and armour had given ships greater effectiveness against land fortifications which would henceforth have to be sunk into the ground. New rifled guns also meant that protective rings of detached forts were required to protect a city or port as far out as possible. The Quebec Citadel and city ramparts were thus hopelessly out of date, a mere ten years after their completion and renovation.

The Levis forts built in 1870 at great expense to the British taxpayer were never garrisoned by the Canadian government and only received armament during a European crisis in 1878, each receiving a single seven-inch breech-loading rifled gun. The defence of Quebec became oriented primarily towards the sea, and by the early twentieth century, the defensive installations of Quebec had all moved progressively eastward, mainly to Point Martiniere and Beaumont on the south shore and to Saint-Jean on the Ile d'Orleans where the Canadian army erected rapid-fire batteries to control the South Channel. The only remaining military activity at Point Levis from 1880 onwards was the annual training camp for militia-men, which did not even take place within the forts' enclosures but in the former makeshift camp of the men who had built them, the Royal Engineers.

The fortification systems handed over to the Canadians by the British were not only obsolete in terms of practical defence and current technology, but reflected an obsolescence throughout Britain's armed forces (and by extension the Canadian Militia) which had not fought any significant major war since Waterloo, with the exception, perhaps, of the Crimean War. It was the deficiencies of the British army in the latter war which provided the catalyst for urgent change, culminating in the Cardwell Reforms of 1871. The new-old British-French fortifications inherited by the Canadian government at Quebec would receive no such restructuring or modification until into the next century and then, mostly for aesthetic purposes or to facilitate modern urban planning.

With the death of Wellington (1852) and the demise



The town as it looked from Point Levis to Wolfe's aide-de-camp Captain Hervey Smyth, 1759.

of his beloved Ordnance Department (1855), the state of fortification in Canada languished for the next 15 years, until the belated construction of the three casemated redoubts at Point Levis. The fact that no improvements were made to the Quebec fortification system between 1831 and 1871, an interval of 40 years, leads one to conclude that, in addition to the British government's reluctance to commit any more of the taxpayer's money to fortifications in Canada, Quebec was no longer considered the "Torres Vedras of Canada" by British strategic planners well before the middle of the nineteenth century.

In fact, by 1840, the whole Wellingtonian defensive strategy becomes suspect given the significant American improvements to railways, highways and canals that had proliferated since the original 1819 military appreciation, and the dubious assumption that Canadians would readily fund and organize strong militia forces to make up for the weaknesses and flaws in the British plan.

The plan that was set in train by Wellington in 1819 was designed to hold the vulnerable Upper Canadian province until the Royal Navy could reinforce the standing forces and, by massive retaliation along the American eastern coast, dissuade the Americans from any further offensive action. This plan with minor revisions or deletions due to funding became the official Canadian defence plan for the next two and a half decades.

The Iron Duke never pretended that his proposed system (representing classical static warfare) was anything more than a defensive one. The additional element of the Royal Navy being free to pounce on the eastern seaboard gave other British planners of the time the ability to claim it was a defensive-offensive strategy in toto, but in essence, the defence of Canada after the War of 1812 was almost exclusively a conscious decision by Britain to defend the colonies using land forces and fortifications only. Various proposals to build naval forces on the Great Lakes as a first line of defence received little support. By 1838, the Royal Navy establishment in Canada was almost non-existent.

Wellington stated this defensive approach quite clearly when he said:

> In considering this [defensive] system I have laid aside as impracticable the notion of attacking the United States on their frontier. I have never seen yet any attack upon that power which was at all likely to answer the purpose ... I am certain that an attack could not succeed made from this frontier, in which we are frozen up for five months of the year and on which the enemy have, and must continue to have, the naval superiority.

In terms of broad strategy, the Duke knew it was more logical to evacuate Upper Canada in wartime and punish the Americans so severely along their coasts as to force them to return the lost province at the peace table. But more complex factors were at play in the formulation of a strategy that would maintain the balance of power, or as historian R.A. Preston has termed it, "an equilibrium of weakness".

For the British government to acknowledge the surrender of Upper Canada, even temporarily, was politically unacceptable and thus, when the Duke stood before Parliament in 1825 he stated,: "It is impossible for His Majesty's Government to withdraw from these Dominions. Whether valuable or otherwise which can scarcely be a question, the *Honour of the Country* would require that they should be defended in War." This sense of "losing face" and international prestige is a recurring theme during the 1815-1871 period, and is an important factor. Britain's role in the Americas, her worldwide prestige and trade, and her competence to maintain on a global scale the pre-eminence that has been described as the *Pax Britannica* would have been seriously compromised by the loss of Canada. In addition to this sense of honour and the attendant aura of being a super-power, one might add the unstated but psychological scar that must have been inflicted on British military and political leaders losing one war to the American colonists and being fought to a stalemate in the other.

In addition to the concept of duty and honour, three more factors demanded that a special and visible effort be made and sufficient monies be expended by Britain so that the "equilibrium of weakness" could be maintained. First, Canada had to be retained as an outer bulwark of the Empire, an advantageous picket post from whence political pressure could be brought to bear against the United States and British sovereignty in North America perpetuated. R.A. Preston has stated that "although Canada has sometimes been described as a hostage held by the United States as a bond for Britain's good behaviour, it was also true that Canada gave Britain a foothold to exact leverage on the United States in international negotiations and politics." If no standing British garrisons and fortresses were present in Canada, the unspoken British fear was that the United States would annex the vast, and barely defensible dominions, thus dangerously boosting the power of an already troublesome rival.

Secondly, the Royal Navy needed secure access to North American timber and naval stores as the eastern Baltic trade could be easily cut off by the growing might of Prussia. Until the demise of the wooden sailing man-of-war was drastically demonstrated by the decisive Russian victory over the Turks at Sinope (1853) and by the course of other naval operations during the Crimean War, North American timber was considered a vital commodity for the preservation of Britain's sea power.

Lastly, a deep fear of rebellion and revolution tying back to the American Revolution and its continuance in the War of 1812 was always under the surface. Although not stated openly by colonial administrators, the army

served to maintain law and order and provide aid to the civil power on request. Any lawlessness that might invite Americans to intervene and annex the "Great White North" was to be avoided at all costs. As well, the British could not overlook the fact that some Canadians had fought on the side of the Americans in the War of 1812 (albeit most of them being recently arrived American immigrants), a fear reinforced by the rebellions of 1837, which precipitated mass troop reinforcements from Britain.

This real fear for domestic security was shared by Wellington as early as 1826 when he rejected an attempt to revive schemes of general emigration from Britain in aid of the defence of Canada. He claimed there were already enough inhabitants in the region to meet the requirements of his defensive system and that "further *premature* [emphasis his] emigration would create a disloyal population."

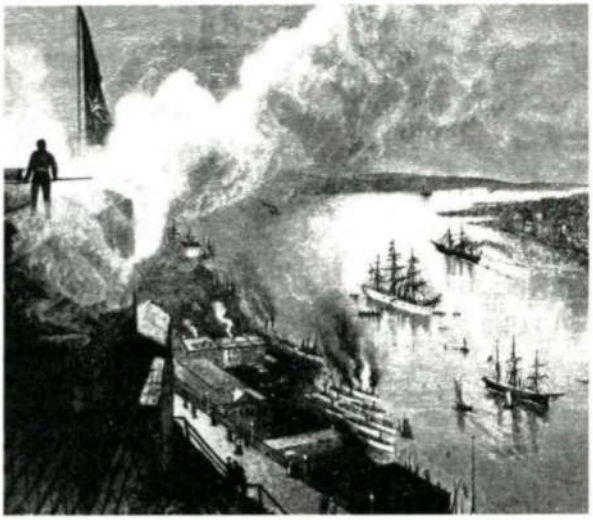
The year before, Wellington had stated bluntly that Canadians could not really be expected to build or fund the fortification and lines of communication proposed in his scheme. He said:

> I am convinced that if these, or some measures of this description, are not adopted, and if measures are not taken at an early period, to manifest the determination of the King's government to hold this dominion at all events, we cannot expect the inhabitants, upon whose loyal and gallant exertions we must in the end depend for their defence, will do otherwise than look for the security of their lives and properties to a seasonable submission to the United States.

In the context of Quebec, he might have also added that French-Canadian inhabitants had shown an infuriating ambivalence about supporting British arms against the American invader during the two previous conflicts. André Charbonneau and other French-Canadian historians point out that "during almost the entire British period, the military distrusted the people of Quebec and this attitude was expressed in the way in which its military occupied the city. The Citadel on the heights was a safe refuge from any eventuality. With the fortification completely controlled, the military installed itself in the very heart of the city."

Wellington was not alone in recognizing that the defensive policy selected and executed for Canada would have to be a careful balancing act, given Canadian attitudes on defence. The constant political posturing by British, American and latterly, Canadian, politicians and administrators during the period 1815-1871, however, was lost on the common folk inhabiting both sides of the border.

The predominant Canadian perception was that war could only be brought on by British error, *i.e.* British or Imperial interests were at stake and thus the British taxpayer should pay. Canadians were more interested in



A tourist Mecca in the making: Cannon smoke from the Citadel battery drifts over Dufferin Terrace and ships on the river. From "Picturesque Canada, 1882-1885."

getting on with their own lives. Open warfare was thus an inconceivable option for the more pragmatic citizens of two compatible "frontier" cultures which shared more commonalities than mutual antagonisms. Indeed, some historians have identified this state of mind as a recurring Canadian attitude vis à vis defence issues — benign neglect of peacetime defence in favour of economic and social development.

While Canadians expected Britain to defend them and the British taxpayer to foot the bill, they were also astute enough to see that the Wellingtonian defence system would mean British regulars could withdraw to fixed and static fortresses, leaving Canadian families and homes exposed to an invading army. Recognizing this legitimate concern of their colonists and the real problem of giving the Americans the initiative to manoeuvre, caused the British to strongly advocate that the Canadians raise strong militia forces to counter the threat.

Reluctance to spend all monies on anything other than commercial and social developments prevailed, however, and convincing Canadians to the contrary was not extensively pursued. Lord Elgin and other colonial administrators took pains, as did Wellington, to highlight the paradox that Canadians were constantly expected to take military steps to obtain security which they could more easily obtain by joining the United States at much less the cost.

Thus, if British planners were serious about maintaining an effective picket post in place and denying key terrain to the American Union, the Canadians had to be kept firmly in the British camp, coddled and convinced that at least a viable defence system was in the making through the Wellingtonian fortification and line of communications programme. Also, the Americans, watching from south of the border, had to be suitably awed and deterred by Britain's ability to defend

Dufferin's romantic new Porte St. Louis, Quebec. From "Picturesque Canada".

its ground. And while most historians concur that the British regulars in garrison in North America were merely "a token insurance" or tripwire against American attack, the real deterrent being the Royal Navy, the British army garrisons in Canada also doubled as an effective force for maintaining law and order and other domestic operations should some British North Americans themselves suddenly feel inclined to hoist the Stars and Stripes.

The early 1840s marked the decline of the Wellingtonian pretence of defendability and no alternative would be offered (except Lieutenant Governor Sir George Arthur's discreetly ignored proposal to return to a naval first-line-of-defence strategy on the Great Lakes) until the American Civil War was well underway. By 1840, the American ability to launch an attack on Canada by the three generally-accepted routes, the Lake Champlain-Richelieu corridor, across the Niagara frontier, and across Lake Ontario to Kingston, had been greatly enhanced by the rapid development of a system of road, canal and railway communications leading from the heart of the Atlantic seaboard to the very threshold of the Canadas. Against such an attack, neither the delaying tactics of the British with militia support nor even the climate could hope to be successful.

This might explain the willingness of British politicians in the aftermath of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty negotiations of 1842 (much to the disgust of Lord Palmerston) to "run about braying that peace is so good a thing, that any Sacrifice is worth making to secure it". Palmerston's assessment was that the Maine boundary dispute could never have been considered to have been a matter "between Peace and War; for the Americans had neither Desire or means to make War, being Bankrupts [*sic*] in Finance and having no Navy that could put to Sea — not above 10 or 12 Sail of the Line altogether". He also reinforced the underlying reason and importance of maintaining the pretence of defending Canada to the last British soldier and sailor when he commented:

> ...if a nation once establishes & proclaims as its Rule of Conduct, that any Sacrifice of interest is preferable to War, it had better at once abdicate its Independence & place itself under the protection of some less Quakerlike state; For to that condition of Subjection it must come at last and it is better to get to it decently and at once, than to arrive at it painfully, after successive humiliations, and all the losses and Sufferings resulting from repeated Spoliations [*sic*] ... This treaty is an act of weakness & of Pusillanimity, ... which lowers the position of England in the opinion of all Foreign Nations, and is source of weakness to us in all our Dealings with every other Power".

British planners at this stage had to decide between American potential and actual intentions or "Desires" with regards to future fortifications or fortification improvement in Canada. In their risk assessment it would appear they subscribed to Palmerston's view that there was no real American intention to invade in the short term. Thus, until circumstances drastically changed with the American Civil War, a laissez-faire approach prevailed with the two "Torres Vedras style" fortresses, Quebec and Halifax, being touted as the vital seaport links between Britain and Canada and the Maritimes respectively.

Thus it fell to Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Jervois to state the obvious with regard to Canadian fortifications in 1864 at the height of the American Civil War: the Emperor had no clothes! Given that the fortifications that Jervois found in place were essentially those which had existed in the year 1840, his logical analysis that Canada was not defensible west of Montreal could be extrapolated in hindsight and applied to the situation in 1840 (albeit American troop strengths and capabilities in 1840 in no way matched their awesome size at the time of Jervois's reporting). Granted an 1862 Commission report on Canadian defence had stated otherwise (perhaps still loath to disturb Wellington's repose), but Jervois bluntly regarded it as a whitewash. His telling comments in the margins of his personal copy of the 1862 report are preserved in the National Archives of Canada. They read: "What is the good of these posts? They can delay the enemy but a short time, must eventually fall — why waste troops to defend them or

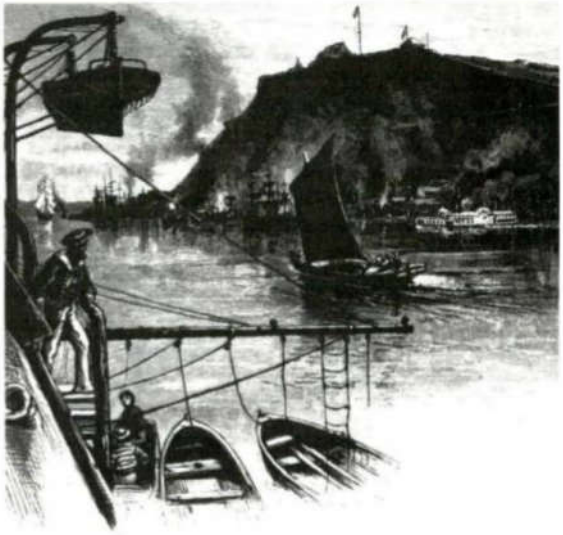
money to build them?"

Jervois therefore recommended in his first 1864 report that only Halifax, Quebec and Montreal be fortified if Britain was anxious to keep a foothold in America. Thus the seeds were sown for the building of three detached forts at Quebec on the Heights of Levis. But he and many other British officers of the same ilk knew that the United States had steadily grown over the war years to achieve an unchallengeable military supremacy in North America. On advising the British government of what it had already known in most circles of power since 1840, Jervois was sent back to advise the Canadian government on measures *they* could take to improve the defences of Canada in conjunction with the British. This time however, Jervois was specifically instructed to be more positive in his dealing with the Canadians by the Duke of Cambridge, to ignore imperial interest and to focus primarily on colonial concerns.

Jervois' second report thus presented a somewhat less dismal prospect for the province if war came. While giving John A. Macdonald and his government a solid rationale to justify a stronger and more participatory militia in Canada, it did not convince Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone in England of the need for more fortifications and improvements. He immediately questioned its findings with basic questions as to how strategic Quebec really was and how the much-vaunted "Torres Vedras" could be held with American ironclads threatening communications in the lower St. Lawrence? Here was a tacit admission for the first time by a major British political figure that the Royal Navy might not be able to provide local sea supremacy. Canada, he argued, suffered its southern neighbour's hostility solely through the British presence in North America, and thus if the British commitment were reduced or removed, the danger would be reduced accordingly.

In retrospect, the decision to remove British troops from Canada in 1871 was akin to taking the British "chip" off the fledgling Dominion's shoulder. It also meant an end to the fortification loan which had materialized as a perceived need from Jervois' more optimistic second report. Canadians were not prepared to apply $8,770,000 to defend against a threat they could simply not envisage. "In a disarmed Canada," writes Desmond Morton, "the Jervois proposals were evidently irrelevant. The Canadian government was delighted to be able to persuade Gladstone to transfer the British guarantee to an equivalent loan for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway. Unwillingly and without even wishing to admit it, Canada had become the senior partner in her own defence."

The fortifications of Quebec remained valid defensive structures until the early 1840s when they became obsolete due to technological change. The Point Levis forts, constructed in 1870 and obsolete from the date of their completion due to rifled artillery advances in the Franco-Prussian War, were added as an afterthought or, as one French-Canadian historian has termed it, "a spectacular gesture" to the Quebec fortification system.



A British "Jack tar" views the Citadel from H.M.S. "Northampton". From "Picturesque Canada".

From 1831 to 1871 they stood primarily as solid enduring symbols of the *Pax Britannica*, not providing any real physical security for the citizens of the city or port (except for the self-contained garrison), but exuding a sense of purpose and resolve on the part of the mother country to come to their assistance if the need arose. The fortifications also served the dual purpose of maintaining complete dominance over the former colonies of New France, the Citadel firmly planted in the bosom of the former capital city with its self-contained garrison.

Once the British departed, the city merchants immediately sought from the Department of Militia and Defence permission to knock down the gates and walls which had been artificial barriers to the city's expansion. Some of these modifications were effected as early as 1871 and the city walls and martello towers quickly fell into disrepair as Quebec citizens used them as ready repositories of quarried stone, or found the social and commercial concerns of the day more vastly important than any need to maintain any pretence of being a fortress city.

Today, the remnants of the fortifications, with much romantic embellishment from the days of Lord Dufferin, still excite the imaginations of the many American, British, French and Canadian tourists who tramp the ramparts or visit the Citadel — all built over the last three centuries to repel, defend, intimidate or comfort their ancestors. ◆

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FIRE!

For several hours the fire demon cavorted, leaped and crackled in his mad race and what previously had been a scene of bustling business activity and happy life, was transformed into a desert of blackened ruins and abject misery.

Not even then was the fiend stayed. All evening and night he continued his mad gambols, licking up and devouring everything in his path. — Ottawa Citizen, 27 April 1900.

Thursday, 26 April, 1900 was a pleasant spring day in the nation's capital, with the temperature in the sixties — no Celsius then. There was, however, a strong wind blowing from the north, and that was to be the crucial factor in the tragic events that unfolded on that memorable day.

Directly across the Ottawa River which separates Ontario and Quebec sits the city of Hull. At 10:30 that morning a chimney fire broke out in a residential section of the "transpontine city", to use the pretentious language of the newspapers of the day. As this was a very common occurrence there was at first little alarm, but it quickly became apparent that the Hull firefighters would not be able to contain the blaze. As the official report of the Ottawa and Hull Fire Relief Fund later described it, Hull was doomed from the start:

> Unfortunately the fire broke out in a thick cluster of wooden houses, furnishing a rapid feeder for the flames, and in a few minutes the brigade was driven back, and as it was apparent that the whole city was threatened, assistance was sought from the mills and large factories, and from the city of Ottawa. A general response was made, but the terrific sweep of the gale and the highly inflammable character of most of the buildings, made it an impossible task for the fire fighters, and in an hour after the blaze started great waves of flame were spreading over the city of Hull, destroying street after street.

People soon realized that there was nothing to be done but flee for their lives. Some of the devout tacked holy pictures to their doors, but this proved no deterrent to the ferocity of the fire. The streets were soon a confusion of fleeing citizens, many trying to save what they could of their possessions. As the wind increased in velocity burning embers were whipped about, igniting new blazes blocks apart. In that afternoon's edition the *Ottawa Journal* described the situation in terms akin to the house-to-house combat of war: "As building by building was taken by the flames, the fierce heat forced the fire-fighters into a large circle. They fought the flames hard, but were forced back foot by foot from building to building, till finally the fire area was measured by streets and blocks instead of buildings." At times the heat became so intense that the firefighters had no choice but to retreat, leaving their lines of hose to be destroyed.

One of the most vivid eyewitness accounts of the fire was provided by Tom Harvey, an employee of the E.B. Eddy Company, the match manufacturers, in a letter to his brother the next day. "Hull and Ottawa," he wrote,

> was a regular hell of fire from ten a.m. Thursday till, well it is burning yet, eight p.m. Friday. The fire started right back of the Hull model school and the wind was blowing a regular gale. I was fighting the fire there and it got so hot we took our hose down in front of Helmers and tried to save the Church and I had just coupled the hose onto the hydrant when the blaze came and the first thing I knew I was on fire and the hose was all burned off the hydrant. I surely

OTTAWA-HULL, APRIL 1900:

'It is not often that you have a chance to see a city burning at your feet'

By F. J. McEvoy

National Archives of Canada

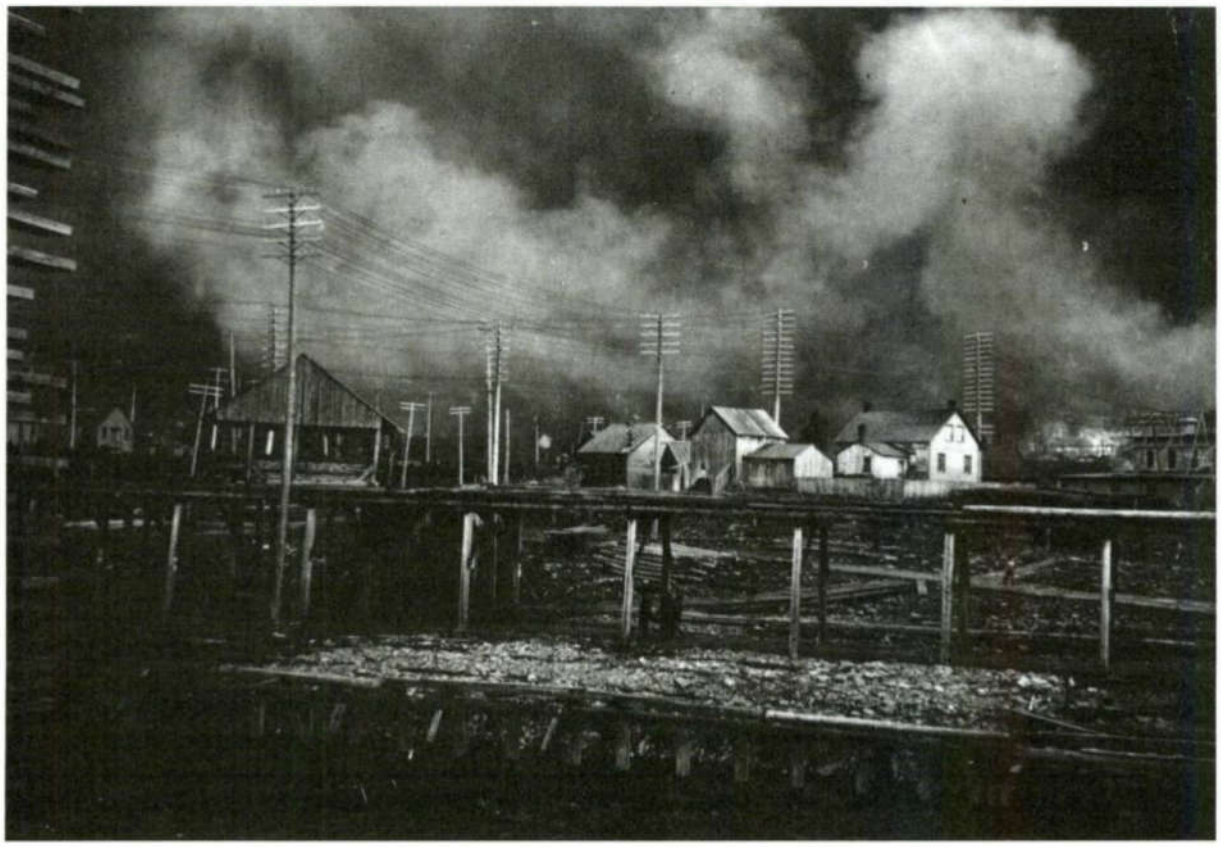
Looking west along Queen Street, Ottawa, during the fire.

would have burned up only I had a heavy rubber coat on. There were so many hoses burned off, the water running in the street, that they could not get any water to put on the fire.

Harvey was then kept busy rescuing others, including his mother:

I run up to the dam around by Hurdman's mills and I found Mr. Miller lying up there unable to move. He was choked with flame and smoke so I got him on my shoulder and carried him all up the logs above the dam for the dam was all on fire and the wind was so strong that it blew me off the boom. I went under but only Mr. Miller's head went in the water. That brought him to, and I was able to handle him better and get him out on the Aylmer Road, then left him just in time to run for the house and carry Mother out all covered up so she could not see the flames all around her.

As families became separated the streets were filled with parents crying for their children, fearing the worst, and children desperately seeking their mothers and fathers, providing a scene of the "wildest and most confusing nature." Carts filled with possessions trundled along as people sought to salvage what they could, but in many cases saw their goods destroyed in the streets as they found they could not outrun the fire. One woman, her furniture removed, "rushed into the burning house and rescued a pair of snow-white kittens, which she exhibited with childish glee." Others were loathe to let the catastrophe interfere with their normal pleasures. According to one newspaper account "a force of brawling shantymen" appeared in Hull and commenced to carouse in the different hotels "some of which were actually



National Archives of Canada

Hull fire, overlooking a lumberyard and mill in the Chaudiere District. The many lumberyards contributed to the spread of the inferno.

burning over their heads." By noon whole blocks lay devastated and most of the city's public buildings were gone.

But the worst was yet to come. Both Hull and Ottawa at that time were lumber towns, with the forest resources of the Ottawa Valley underpinning the local economy. As a result the shore of the Ottawa River was piled high with lumber, enticing fuel for what the *Ottawa Citizen* melodramatically called the "fire demon". On the Hull side the mills of the E.B. Eddy Company and the lumber yards of the Hull Lumber Company soon went up. The fire then hop-scotched across a series of islands in the river as the wind swept burning brands before it. Reaching the Ottawa side, the flames set upon the yards of two of the greatest of the lumber magnates, J.R. Booth and H.F. Bronson. A long shed behind the offices at Booth's was the first to catch; fanned by the wind the whole area was "a mass of fire" within minutes.

As in Hull, burning shingles were scattered in all directions by the wind, spreading the fire to new locations simultaneously. The fire attacked the Chaudiere District, home to most of the city's industries, and the LeBreton Flats, where many of the workers lived. Business after business went down before the fire's insatiable progress: the lumber industries, of course, but also manufacturing establishments, all the property of the Canadian Pacific Railway, including Union Station (not to be confused with the Union Station later built in the city centre), as well as the power houses of the Ottawa Electric Railway and the Electric Lighting Company, adding loss of power to the other woes inflicted by the fire.

As the residential district was attacked the scenes enacted in Hull were repeated. As the Relief Fund report described it:

> Hundreds of the poorest of Ottawa's poor fled with only scant clothing on their backs. The household effects, upon which the greater number had no insurance, were all lost, and crying women and wailing children were struggling on every side. The men worked as only frenzied men can work, many moving their furniture three or four times only at last to see it go up in smoke. It was a pathetic sight to see aged women and helpless babes, without friends or shelter, who knew not where to turn for help.

By two P.M. it took an average of ten minutes for a house to be destroyed. The area was a scene of chaos, the *Journal* reported, "smoke ... lying low on the streets, the dust flying in dense masses. Women and children cried,

men shouted and swore at the horses and people in their way, and rigs ran in all directions."

Under these conditions the Ottawa Fire Department, like its Hull counterpart, faced a hopeless task. Its strength at the time stood at fifty-one officers and men with eight hose wagons, two hose reels, two ladder trucks, two aerial ladder trucks and two steam engines, all horse drawn. In fact, the firefighters had to concentrate much of their effort at saving the city's pump house from the flames, thus preserving the water supply. It was the biggest test of his career for Fire Chief Peter Provost, who three years previously became at 33 the youngest chief in Ottawa's history. At one point the chief was trapped on Victoria Island and "had a warm time of it getting out", according to the *Citizen*. He had nothing but praise for his men, who worked without food or refreshment until totally fatigued. "If we had had dozens of fire engines," the chief told the press, "we could not have extinguished the flames with the high wind that was blowing and which was increased by the draft made by the fire itself."

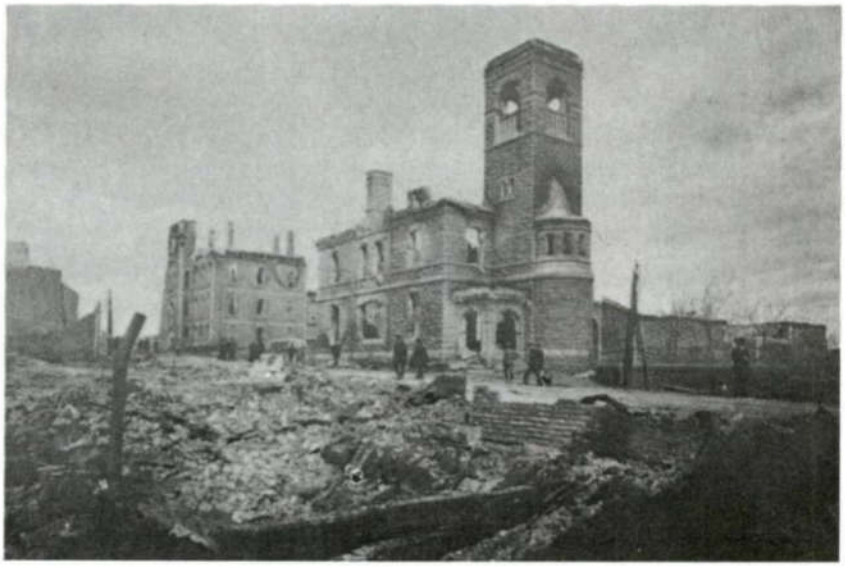
The situation demanded a total effort by all, even the highest in the land. One firefighter owed his life to the Governor General, Lord Minto. His engine surrounded by fire, he jumped into the water to escape and was pulled out exhausted at the other side by Minto and another man. The Governor General, the *Citizen* commended, "stayed at the fire until a late hour and was untiring in his kindness towards the sufferers." Ordinary citizens formed bucket brigades and did their best to contain the fire.

As it became apparent that the situation was out of control, help was sought from other sources. A call went out for men and equipment from other cities. Montreal sent a detachment of eight men with five horses, one engine and one hose reel. They came by rail in under two hours and rendered effective service throughout the night. At three P.M. buglers went through the streets sounding the call-out for the militia, whose efforts proved crucial. Three companies formed a bucket brigade and kept the fire from spreading any further east, towards centretown. Others descended the cliffs below the Supreme Court to the lumber piles below. In desperation they used buckets of water, all they had available, to extinguish the flying sparks and embers that would otherwise have set this lumber ablaze as well.

Also at three o'clock Parliament met, with very few members present, but was immediately adjourned. As Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier noted, nothing could be accomplished with the loss of the power supply. In fact there was every possibility that the fire would spread to the centre of the city, destroying Parliament Buildings and all else in the process. The situation was critical but two factors saved the city. Centretown was built on a height that looked down on the area where the fire raged, providing a natural barrier. That barrier might well have been breached, however, except for the fact that at sundown the wind that had been primarily responsible for spreading the fire died down.

By nightfall, though the fire continued to burn, the worst was over, but the horror of what had happened was evident. Even the author of the Relief Fund report was inspired to a poetic description not normally found in official documents: "The sky was lurid and standing on the cliff overlooking the burning area, one saw nothing but a great sheet of flame, and it was impossible to distinguish one building from another." One of the keenest observers of the scene was Franklin Gadsby, a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, who described the conflagration in the *Canadian Magazine* in July. "The most vivid picture of the fire, that lingers with me," he wrote,

> is one seen at half-past seven in the evening from Parliament Hill. The shades of night are falling, and



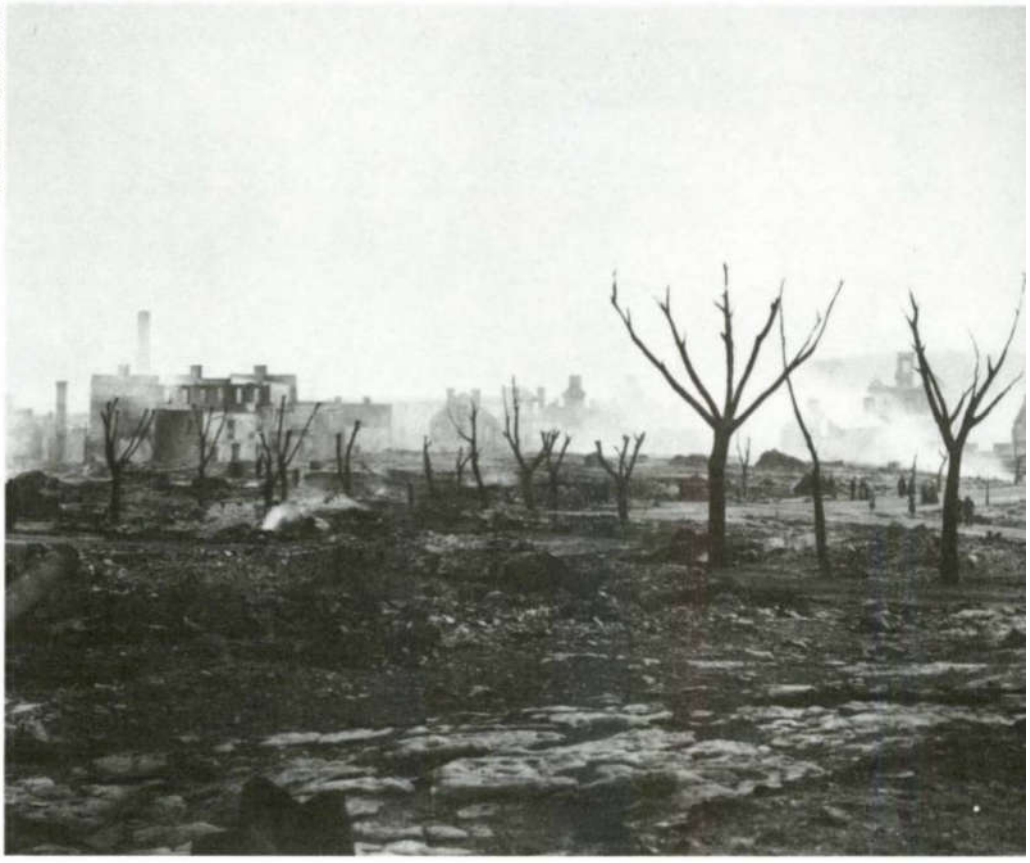
Canadian Magazine July 1900

The remains of the Hull post office and court house.

National Archives of Canada

All that was left of the Booth mansion after the fire.

National Archives of Canada



Little remains in the centre of the Hull fire area.

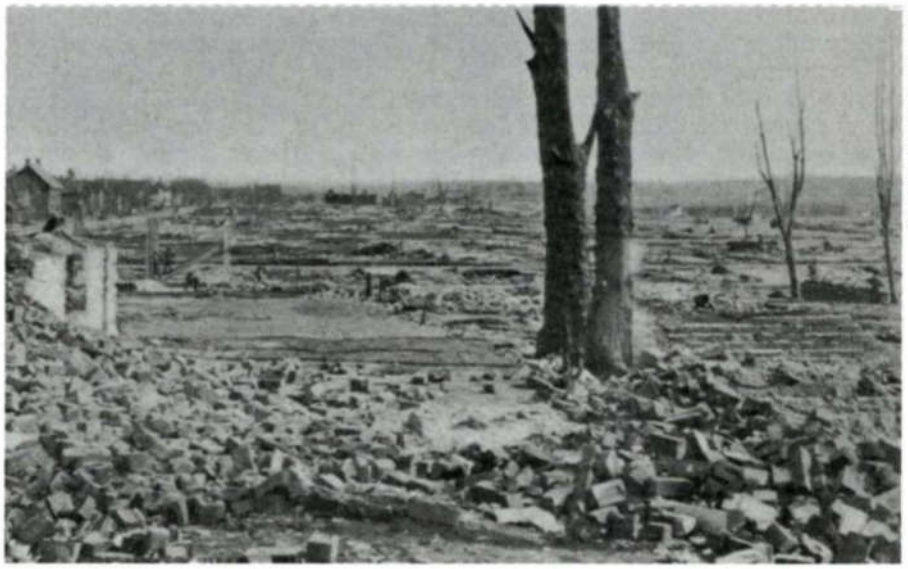
a glorious sunset flames behind the purple Laurentians. [He meant the Gatineau Hills.] But Nature's splendour is eclipsed by the red hell that flares and flickers in the valley of the Ottawa. The erstwhile flourishing city of Hull seems to be utterly doomed. The fierce gale has swept the fire westward to the limits of the town. Now the fire of its own force and volition shoulders back against the wind and eats up massive buildings like so much paper. I note one roof after another twinkle, glow and burst out in garish effulgence ... Half the population of Ottawa is lined along the escarpment of the cliff, watching the spectacle. It is not often you have a chance to see a city burning at your feet ... Darkness hovers over the whole city for the electric light works have been destroyed. There is nothing to divert the attention from the menacing grandeur of the conflagration. The river flows along black and sullen save where it is traversed by broad red shafts of light from burning deals or mill flumes ... Below are the flats ... The reek of the pit in your nostrils, sidewalks torn up, telegraph poles and trees afire, sparks flying, flames hissing, a hopeless huddle of broken wires, hosereels clanging along, gaunt walls of gutted houses showing dimly through the smoke — everywhere confusion and terror.

The toll taken by the fire in property damage was enormous. Miraculously, there were only seven deaths; it could have been much worse, as the fire spread so quickly and people waited till the last moment to escape as they often vainly sought to save their possessions. The Hull jail had to be emptied and the prisoners transferred to Ottawa. The institution of the Sisters of Mercy, used as a maternity hospital and home for friendless women, was destroyed but the inhabitants safely evacuated. The aged, the sick and the infirm all had to be moved to places of safety. While the fire was a great tragedy, the low death rate was something to be thankful for.

While in many instances the fire brought out the best in people, there was, as always, a minority who sought to take advantage of the tragedy of others and some looting took place. One man who remonstrated with looters was hit on the head with a bottle. At one point, three detectives caught a number of looters inside a store. They had no time to make arrests but blocked the door and as each looter came out, the *Journal* reported, they grabbed him and "after giving him a good kicking, threw him into the street. Things looked ugly for a while, but the flames came and blotted out everything." Rough justice, but normal policing duties were not a priority under the circumstances.

The fire left an incredible scene of devastation in its wake. In total over 3,200 buildings were destroyed, some 1,900 in Ottawa and 1,300 in Hull. In the latter city all public buildings were swept away except for the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Millions of board feet of lumber were lost. In Hull some 5,700 people were left homeless, an incredible 42 per cent of the population; in Ottawa the figure was over 8,300 people, or 14 per cent of the total. In all the fire covered 716 acres, 440 of them in Ottawa. In monetary terms the total damage was approximately $9.5 million, about $185 million today. The fire was no respecter of rank. As well as sweeping away the homes of the poor it also took the mansions of such notables as George Foster, a past and future Conservative cabinet minister, and lumber king J.R. Booth, who lost the beautiful stone house he had built in 1875 as well as his lumber yards.

The fire exhibited, in Gadsby's words, "a grim



Canadian Magazine July 1900

A scene of desolation in the burned area of Ottawa.

National Archives of Canada

Stark girders and twisted rails attest to the ferocity of the blaze.

humour of its own ... Here is a solid stone shop burnt to the pavement, and a miserable little wooden smithy, cheek by jowl with it, bears not a scar. Here is a flimsy little shack unmarred — it has gone through four fires — and not a hundred feet away two splendid stone residences are so many heaps of rubble."

With so many left homeless the immediate priority was to provide for those who had nowhere else to go. That night food and shelter were available at a number of sites, including the Drill Hall at Cartier Square near the Parliament Buildings, where the Militia Department provided mattresses, tables and benches; the Exhibition Grounds (Lansdowne Park), the Amateur Athletic Club, the Salvation Army Barracks and the Roman Catholic Presbytery in Hull. All who required shelter were accommodated within 48 hours. The situation, grim as it was, was not without its humorous moments. The shelters had a problem with dogs who wanted to sleep with their owners, taking up valuable space. They were driven out, snarling and biting, but hung around the doors and made occasional forays at the entrance when they thought they could get past the watchful policeman on duty.

The next day the extent of the damage was revealed to a horrified populace who, in the poignant words of the Relief Fund report, "wandered over the burned territory, and gazed in awestricken wonder at the awful scene. Stone walls stood out like huge phantoms amid the gloomy environment of ashes and smoke, and scattered everywhere were grim evidences of the work of the destroying fire. In the residential sections not even walls were standing. It was one vast field of ashes, swept as clean as a forest fire. The scene, for chaos and illimitable misery, surpassed anything before witnessed in this country."

Faced with this desperate situation the city acted quickly. Council met at eleven that morning and a General Relief Committee was struck to look after immediate needs. Later an Executive Committee was formed to process the claims that were made in the aftermath of the fire. In the short run the situation was well handled. Food and clothing were distributed by a committee of women under the presidency of the Countess of Minto, with Lady Laurier as her vice-president. For the first week all items were sent to the Drill Hall for distribution, not only to those staying at shelters but also to those fortunate enough to have been taken in by family or friends. Some 3,000 people were fed daily until 19 May, while those remaining homeless were sheltered at the Exhibition Grounds until the middle of June. With

the bridges out of commission, food and supplies had at first to be transported to Hull by steamer and barge.

The extent of the devastation made the fire a national and international story and donations in money and supplies poured in from all over. *The Times* of London, noting Canada's contribution to the fighting in South Africa, called on the inhabitants of the mother country to repay the debt:

> We cannot allow Canada to bear this burden unaided at a time when she has come to our aid, not merely with her purse, but with the best of her blood. It must be our privilege to do what in us lies for the relief of her suffering children. It is a claim that we should meet freely at any time, but which we shall now meet with joy that we can show ourselves sensible of the service that Canada has done us.

The British people showed their generosity. The Lord Mayor of London opened a Mansion House Fund which raised $209,000, including contributions from Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales. The London Stock Exchange raised $45,000. The cities of Glasgow and Liverpool each sent $21,000. In all Great Britain sent over $360,000 with a further $53,000 coming from other parts of the Empire. A total of $33,000 came from the United States. The bulk of the money donated came from all across Canada and Newfoundland, from Victoria to St. John's, just over half a million dollars. Contributions came from the rich, from ordinary people and children, from churches, businesses, organizations, city governments. It was, the Relief Fund report noted, "a most gratifying demonstration of the common ties which bind mankind in one great brotherhood."

The money was used to good effect by the Executive Committee. Over 3,000 cheques were distributed totalling just under $10 million. All claims were carefully scrutinized with very few fraudulent claims found. Help was given as quickly as possible to ensure that people did not move away, and very few did so. Special consideration was given to the injured, widows with large families, the elderly and the infirm. The poor were also treated generously, and in most cases received as much as they had lost. Gifts in kind were stored in the Rideau Rink, which was filled to overflowing, with 80 employees working morning and night for two months after the fire distributing the goods.

Rebuilding began with amazing speed. E.B. Eddy had a temporary office open within a week. The match factory was back in operation by early July, the paper mill on 6 December. J.R. Booth, too, was soon back in business. The CPR rebuilt its station and freight sheds. In fact, by the end of 1900, 750 homes and a large number of industrial buildings had been rebuilt in the burned-out area. The homes belonged to the poor and the workers; the rich, as exemplified by Booth, moved elsewhere. The

National Archives of Canada

An open-air church service amid the ruins shortly after the fire.

Lumber King's grand new centretown mansion is now a private club.

That proved a wise decision. The presence of so much lumber within the city was blamed by many for the devastating nature of the fire, and calls for its removal were widespread, the question even being raised in the Senate. Nothing was done, however, and in 1903, fire again broke out in Booth's yards. Though not nearly as serious, much of the rebuilt area was burned again and between 250 and 300 families left homeless for the second time in three years. Once again the cry went up to ban the lumber yards. Booth threatened to move his business elsewhere and nothing was done. To give Booth his due, however, he did supply free lumber to the rebuilding effort in 1900.

Ottawa and Hull rebounded rapidly from what could have been a crushing blow. The quick and effective action of the authorities, aided by the generosity of many, even those thousands of miles away, kept suffering to a minimum and put people back on their feet. Of greatest importance was the resiliency of the victims themselves, as noted by the ubiquitous Franklin Gadsby. Finding people gathering nails from the ruins the day after the fire, he enquired why they were doing so. "Oh, they are very good nails — they have been through the fire — what you call tempered. We shall use them to build new houses. Such [Gadsby concluded] is the indomitable Canadian spirit." ◆

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Mayflower Compact & Family Compact

Contrasting Views of the Political Authority

By Chris Raible

John Graves Simcoe

Signatures of some of the 'Mayflower' pilgrims

After a long and hazardous journey across the Atlantic, the small ship *Mayflower* anchored at last off the Massachusetts coast in the late fall of 1620. As its 101 passengers made ready to land at Plymouth, they were faced with an unexpected problem.

The *Mayflower* had brought them to the wrong place. The would-be New World settlers were far north of their intended destination. For its new settlement, the company on board had been issued a patent for Virginia, not for New England. According to William Bradford's later account of the episode, several men on board began to make "discontented and mutinous speeches." They announced that once they were ashore, they would "use their own liberty, for none had power to command them." Since they were beyond the boundaries of the Virginia colony, the "mutinous" men also considered themselves outside the jurisdiction of its law.

In response to this threat to the general welfare of the company, there was "a combination made by them before they came ashore," that is, a collective agreement was drawn up and signed by nearly all the male passengers:

> In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are under written, ... doe by these presents solemnly and mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine our selves togeather into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation, & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enact constitute and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for ye general good of ye Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

This "Mayflower Compact" became, according to Bradford, "the first foundation of their government," the base on which the colony was built, "as firm as any patent, and in some respects more sure."

Not long ago, I conducted an informal survey of a number of friends and associates, all of whom are well-versed in Canadian history and are fairly familiar with American history. Not one of them could recall ever having heard of the Mayflower Compact.

They had all heard of the *Mayflower*, of course. They knew about the "Pilgrims" (as they were romantically dubbed in the nineteenth century), their ordeals, their survival, and their celebrating the "First Thanksgiving". The story is part of the American myth, ritually recalled on a national holiday every November. It would be difficult for anyone living next door to the United States to avoid hearing it. But my colleagues knew nothing of that early covenant to create a government.

Those Plymouth settlers were, by their own testimony, all "the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, by ye grace of God, of Great Britaine, France & Ireland King, defender of ye faith." Their colony was founded 155 years before the American Revolution. It is a chapter in the history on this continent, part of the common heritage of all North Americans.

The use of a covenant to cement their community was not a new idea for those *Mayflower* passengers. For them it was a natural extension of their Calvinist beliefs about the nature of the church. Those "visible saints," as they called themselves, had absolutely no use for established ecclesiastical hierarchies, nor even for church synods or presbyteries. Their congregation was an entirely self-governing voluntary association. As free men (women were not — theologically or politically — in the circle of power) they had covenanted with each other and with God to create their church. They had even chosen their own minister rather than having a priest appointed for them by a bishop or a patron.

Those Plymouth settlers were not Puritans; they were not trying to purify the established Church of England. That church, they believed, had become so corrupted that it was no longer a church at all. The dissenters had therefore separated themselves from the Church of England to form their own pure congregation. By separating themselves, they had suffered — some had even died for their faith. They had felt forced to leave England, going first to Holland, but soon feeling that they could not long stay there. As refugees they had sailed for North America, to begin a new life in a new world.

Their Mayflower Compact clearly registered their intention to create their own government, "to enact constitute and frame such just and equal lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet & convenient for the general good." The next step was to "confirm Mr. John Carver (a man godly and well approved amongst them) their governor for that year." They thus elected their first leader from their own number — he was not an appointed officer of the British Crown.

Bradford's history, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, continued the story of that early experiment in democracy:

> As time would admit, they met and consulted of laws and orders, both for their civil and military government as the necessity of their condition did require, still adding thereunto ... as cases did require. In these hard and difficult beginnings they found some discontents and murmurings arise amongst some, and mutinous speeches and carriages in others; but they were soon quelled and overcome by the wisdom, patience and just equal carriage of things, by the governor and better part, which clave faithfully together in the main.

The signing of the Mayflower Compact in 1620 has often been cited as an early example — perhaps the only historically valid example — of a "social contract". In Plymouth colony, a group of men started from scratch and created a government *de novo*.

The concept that government is a social contract was, to be sure, developed more fully in the next several decades by two British political philosophers. In 1651 Thomas Hobbes published his *Leviathan*. He argued that a social contract had been made by men in their original "state of nature", a condition described by Hobbes in a famous phrase as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". In order to safeguard themselves against the perils of that terrible state, they had given their liberty into the

hands of a sovereign. Once made, Hobbes contended, that contract could not be broken.

In contrast, John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, published in 1690, argued that the social contract was conditional. The sovereign had a constant obligation to protect the natural rights of life and property. A failure to do so was breaking of the contract and, according to Locke, a justification for replacing the sovereign.

The differences between Hobbes and Locke were political as much as they were philosophical. They both wrote with more than mere theoretical purpose. Hobbes published at the end of the English Civil War. Charles I had just been executed, an act Hobbes abhorred. Locke's treatise was issued just after the crowning of William and Mary, the "Glorious Revolution" in which Locke rejoiced. Nevertheless, both philosophers argued that the authority of government is based on a social contract, on the mutual agreement of free men.

Nearly a century later, the concept of a social contract inspired the more famous 1776 declaration:

> That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

The principle was firmly entrenched in law in 1787:

> We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

From the early Plymouth experience there thus evolved a basic American political idea: the people came first and secondarily they formed whatever government they minimally required. Government in the New World was created in a new way — solely by and for the good of the people. That this notion is a distortion of a far more complex history matters not. The principle that government is a voluntary social contract became a fundamental part of the American political ideology.

In Canada there is no comparable legend. There is no similar dramatic story of a social contract in Canadian history.

By way of contrast, consider the establishment of a new province of Upper Canada. Like Plymouth in 1620, it was to be a haven for refugees — that was at least part of the purpose of creating it. But the act of forming the new colony in Canada in 1791 took a very different form.

In the years immediately following the end of the American Revolution, many who had loyally supported George III and the British government during the war suffered persecution. Many of them moved north into Canada to make a fresh start. But unlike the Plymouth Pilgrims, the Loyalists coming to Upper Canada after 1783 found a structure of government firmly in place. Already living in the area, of course, were a number of native people, as well as other more recent settlers. But in a very real sense, for English-speaking immigrants, law and order were implanted first, prior to their arrival. The Constitutional Act of 1791 explicitly declared it:

> Whereas ... it is expedient and necessary that further provision should be made for the good Government and prosperity [of Canada] ... And whereas his Majesty has been pleased to signify to divide his Province of Quebec into two separate Provinces, to be called the Province of Upper Canada and the Province of Lower Canada ...

The language of the Act made lines of governmental authority clear:

> [B]e it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same ... that there shall be within each of the said Provinces respectively a Legislative Council and an Assembly ...

The creation of a parliament in each province was decided by the King, not by the people. Furthermore, his rule was not diminished:

> His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, shall have power ... by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly of such Provinces respectively, to make laws for the peace, welfare and good Government thereof ... and that all such laws being passed ... and assented to by His Majesty ... or assented to in His Majesty's name by such person as His Majesty ... shall from time to time appoint to be the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor of such Province ... shall be, and the same are hereby declared to be ... valid and binding, to all intents and purposes whatever.

Note the language: to provide "good Government and prosperity," George III decided "to divide his province of Quebec into two separate provinces." In each one he decided to create a Legislative Council and an Assembly "to make laws for the peace, welfare and good Government thereof," but such laws would only be "valid and binding" when "assented to by His Majesty ... or in His Majesty's name" by someone appointed by His Majesty.

These decisions by the monarch were made, to be sure, with the "advice and consent" of Parliament. As a

matter of historical fact, the new forms of Canadian government had been agreed upon by colonial officials, accepted by British ministers, voted on by both Houses of Parliament, and only then decreed by King George. But the language perpetuated the fiction that the King had decided.

This idea traces back to the old concept of the divine right of Kings to rule. By the end of the eighteenth century, of course, this had become something of a legal fiction. Nearly all of the British monarch's power had been assumed by Parliament. But the sustaining myth remained — the King determines what is best for his people, not the people themselves.

Years later, during the reign of Queen Victoria, the English constitutional authority Walter Bagehot aptly summarized the idea:

> If you ask the immense majority of the Queen's subjects by what right she rules, they would never tell you that she rules by Parliamentary right, by virtue of 6 Anne, c. 7. They will say she rules by "God's grace": they believe that they have a mystic obligation to obey her.

In the Constitutional Act of 1791 there was certainly no suggestion of a compact between the citizens of Upper Canada. There were no notions of voluntary self-government. Indeed, when Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe assembled the first Parliament of Upper Canada in September of 1792, he warned against "pernicious principles" from the United States. And when he prorogued it a month later, he reminded its members that unlike the United States,

> This province is singularly blessed, not with a mutilated Constitution, but with a Constitution which has stood the test of experience, and is the very image and transcript of that of Great Britain, by which she has long established and secured to her subjects as much freedom and happiness as it is possible to be enjoyed under the subordination necessary to civilized Society.

The message was clear. British subjects in Upper Canada had "as much freedom and happiness as it is possible to enjoy" while still remaining a "civilized Society". Creating the new province had created nothing new — the "image and transcript" of the old order had simply been replicated in the New World. Any American suggestions of "inalienable rights" — or French notions of "the Rights of Man" — were dangerous.

In Simcoe's mind, the only concept even suggestive of a social contract — he certainly would not have used the phrase — was that government is ordered through the collective agreement of a few people, a very few people, in positions of authority. He believed in the rule of a permanent ruling class. The 1791 Act even provided that membership in the Legislative Council, like the British House of Lords, could in the future be hereditary.

Under the crown.

Those constitutional provisions for Upper Canada were never put into practice, but nonetheless the province was soon in the political control of a cluster of persons who occupied government offices. Within a few years, they had evolved into an oligarchy which maintained its power through a network of appointed positions, interconnected by kinship as well as friendship.

This ruling élite was described 40 years later by William Lyon Mackenzie. In a now-famous column in his *Colonial Advocate*, he listed by name 30 men who held important appointed offices — Robinsons, Boultons, Jarvises, and others — all linked to each other by ties of blood and marriage:

> This family connexion rules Upper Canada according to its own good pleasure, and has no efficient check from this country to guard the people against its acts of tyranny and oppression ... It includes the whole of the judges of the supreme civil and criminal tribune ... It includes half the Executive Council or provincial cabinet. It includes the Speaker and other eight members of the Legislative Council ... It includes the President and Solicitor of the Bank and about half the Bank Directors ... This family compact surround the Lieutenant Governor, and mould him like wax to their will; they fill every office with their relatives, dependants and partisans ... The whole of the revenues of Upper Canada are in reality at their mercy; they are paymasters, receivers, auditors, Kings, Lords, and Commons!

The problem with the "Family Compact" was not simply that a small group of men held power, but that there was no "efficient check ... to guard the people against its acts of tyranny and oppression." They were not chosen by the people, they did not rule by any form of popular consent.

A few years later, Lieutenant-Governor Francis Bond Head openly defended this ruling establishment:

> The "Family Compact" is nothing more or less than that "social fabric" which characterizes every civilized community in the world ... [It is] composed of those members of its society who, either by their abilities of character have been honoured by the confidence of the executive government, or who, by their industry and intelligence, have amassed wealth. The party, I own, is comparatively a small one; but to put the multitude at the top and the few at the bottom is a radical reversion of the pyramid of society which every reflecting man must foresee, can end only by its downfall.

The contrast was clear. Was political power to be exercised by those who ruled with the consent of the people or by those whose authority was established on more traditional lines? Was Canada to be governed by the principle of the Mayflower Compact or by that of the Family Compact?

Just before the outbreak of the 1837 Rebellion, Mackenzie proposed a new constitution for Upper Canada. It completely embraced the concept of the social contract. With a fascinating bit of historical revisionism, it even transformed the Constitutional Act of 1791 into a compact, a "solemn covenant made with the people of Upper and Lower Canada," which had "been continually violated by the British Government, and our rights usurped." That breaking of the covenant thus justified its preamble:

> We, the people of the State of Upper Canada, acknowledging with gratitude the grace and beneficence of GOD, in permitting us to make choice of our form of Government, and in order to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of civil and religious liberty to ourselves and our posterity, establish this Constitution.

The Upper Canadian rebels had evolved into political separatists. Like the passengers on the *Mayflower*, they were determined to write their own laws. Unlike more moderate Canadian reformers — men like Robert Baldwin, political puritans of a sort — the rebels of 1837 had abandoned all hope of making the British government more responsible.

The Rebellion failed, but questions of power and authority of government in Canada continued to occupy political debate. The 1867 Confederation of British provinces did not exactly give power to the Canadian people. The authority to form that new Canadian government came from above, not below. The British North America Act was "enacted and declared by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons." The Dominion was created by those in power in England, not by the people of Canada.

The phrases of clause 91 of the Act revealed the underlying assumption as to where power lay: "It shall be lawful for the Queen by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons, to make laws for the peace, order and good government in Canada."

In 1867 the pretense of the power of the British government over Canada was maintained — and it was more than mere pretense. Not until the Statute of Westminster in 1931 did the Canadian government have full control over its foreign policy. And only in 1982, with the "patriation" of the Constitution, were all the old political ties severed. Decisions to amend the Constitution of Canada can now be made entirely in Canada; no British ratification is required.

There remain in Canadian law and practice, to be sure, numerous references to "the Crown". The Queen continues to be the Queen of Canada, no matter what may happen in the United Kingdom. In form, our nation is still a "constitutional monarchy" rather than a republic, but in practice it seems to make very little difference.

Recent Canadian political struggles have overtaken the old fiction. In the 1992 referendum, the people refused to authorize the government to amend the constitution. Nothing in the legal documents requires such a voted permission. In 1993, the Ontario government attempted, by gathering union officials, to re-negotiate its "social contract". Subsequent events demonstrated that the government retains power to legislate whatever changes it wishes, but nonetheless the concept of a "contract" was perpetuated. As a necessary step to the achievement of Quebec "sovereignty", that province's government has determined to ask the permission of its citizens.

In Canada we usually trace our political descent from non-revolutionary lines, very different from our American cousins. In practice, however, we apparently have evolved into radical democrats and dissenters. We came to this continent, most of us, on different vessels, but we are not unlike those passengers on the *Mayflower*. We may not use the phrases of their Compact, but we have come to accept their principles. As Canadians we also believe that we have joined "our selves togeather into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation."

Not very long ago, the *Globe and Mail*, in an editorial questioning the use of photo radar to catch speeding motorists, solemnly reminded its readers that

> the state is the creation of a self-governing people. We do not have such rights as the state allots us; rather, it has such powers, and only such powers, as we consent to give to it.

The notion would have been political heresy to Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe. ◆

Ontario historian Chris Raible has written extensively on the history of Upper Canada.

If You're from Winnipeg You'll Remember

The North End

"At a reunion honouring the 75th anniversary of St. John's Technical High School several years back," writes Monty Hall in his introduction to Armand Paquette's book of paintings of North End Winnipeg life, "we heard a recitation of all the famous doctors, lawyers, athletes and others who hailed from the North End. They included three Metropolitan Opera singers, a lawyer who sat on the World Court, the doctor who invented the heart-lung machine, and a famous nuclear scientist. We also produced a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada along with countless showbusiness personalities and hockey players."

In his book *Markings*, Winnipeg artist Armand Paquette, who grew up in the North End, captures the energy and colour of the great prairie immigrant neighbourhood that so enriched Canadian life. Here we present a sample of his work. *Markings* is published by Loch & Mayberry Fine Art Inc., 306 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg, MB. R2M 1J8.

A.J. Paquette

Private Collection

Late Night Shopping, Selkirk Avenue.

Private Collection

North End Weekend.

Private Collection

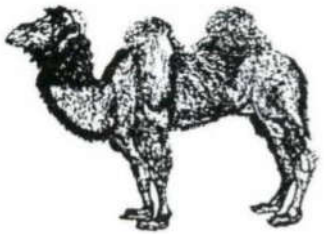
St. John's Tech and branch library.

Private Collection

Going Nowhere, Main and Redwood.

Private Collection

Tire Swing.



Trudy Duivenvoorden Mitic tracks

Camels in the Cariboo

On an April morning in 1862 the townsfolk of Victoria, British Columbia, crowded along Johnson Street to witness an extraordinary spectacle. From the Esquimalt waterfront came a parade of 23 bedraggled camels slowly wending its way to a makeshift holding pen at the corner of Johnson and Douglas streets.

Earlier in the day the ungainly, two-humped Bactrians had hobbled down the ramp of the steamer, *Hermann*. The long trip, first from Manchuria to San Francisco and then the final leg to Victoria, had left the survivors weak, emaciated, and in no mood to entertain the throng of curiosity-seekers that had gathered to witness the offloading. In short order, they had "frightened the horses at Esquimalt out of their propriety and a week's appetite". One particularly cantankerous camel, according to the local press, lashed out and kicked the *Hermann*'s captain, George S. Wright, smartly into the harbour.

Among the novel newcomers was a calf, which some sources cite as having been born en route from San Francisco; other reports claim it was born in Victoria. In any event, its mother was quickly dubbed "Her Camelship" by the local press, perhaps because of her wanton disdain for the gawking crowds that gathered at the holding pen during the week or so the camels were housed there.

In the crowd was a youth who repeatedly teased the infant Bactrian until Her Camelship could stand it no longer. According to local news reports, the youth "paid dearly for his temerity" when the infuriated dam "raised her head to a level with her tormentor's eye and, with a noise resembling the rush of a full head of steam from a boiler, fired through her nostrils about two gallons of dirty water."

The *Hermann*'s exotic cargo had been commissioned to fulfill one man's vision of instant wealth in the Cariboo region deep in the British Columbia interior. The Cariboo Gold Rush, touched off in 1858 when the precious metal was discovered near the frontier town of Quesnel Forks, was already at its heyday in early 1862.

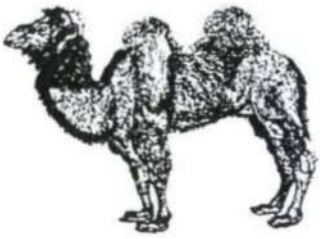
In the early 1860s claims were cropping up all along the Cariboo Trail — which ran from Lillooet to Quesnel and became known as the Cariboo Wagon Road after a major upgrade in 1864 — with as many as 35 companies mining and panning, elbow to elbow, on each of several creeks in the area. By 1861 several thousand men were searching for gold in the Cariboo region. Hundreds of mules kept the mines and mining towns supplied with everything from "shoe laces to pianos".

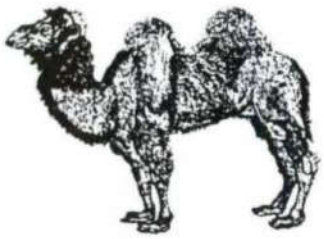
It was not uncommon to see more than one hundred pack animals simultaneously leave a supply post such as Fort Alexandria for the various points along the Cariboo Road. In one day alone, 5 June 1861, 106 mules left Yale carrying 30,000 pounds of goods destined for Barkerville, at that time the gold capital of the world.

The total amount of gold extracted from the Cariboo will never be known; much of it was taken back to the United States by Americans who were quick to retreat after striking it rich. Of the gold that stayed in the colony, the privately-owned MacDonald and Co. Bank alone exchanged $602,734 for banknotes in 1862.

One prominent merchant and packer of that region, Frank Laumeister, knew that a fortune lay in store for anyone who could deliver goods and supplies to the gold mines with greater efficiency and in less time than the reliable but plodding mule trains. A mule burdened with a 200-pound pack could travel 15 miles a day. This meant a return trip from Lillooet to Quesnel could take as many as 20 days. Mules were expensive to feed, and mining companies clamoured constantly for more supplies than the packers could hope to deliver.

Laumeister had heard that camel trains had been used with impressive results during the California Gold Rush of 1849. His American sources assured him a camel could transport 1,000 pounds of freight 30 to 40 miles a day. Camels, he was told, could comfortably travel without water for a week and subsist on little more





than sagebrush. With freight rates in the Cariboo at 50 cents a pound, Laumeister was certain camels were his ticket to a quick fortune. He estimated a profit of $60,000 in the first season alone. With partners Adam Heffly and Henry Ingram, Frank Laumeister formed a syndicate and purchased 23 camels in San Francisco for $6,000.

The dam and her calf were deemed unfit for further travel and were turned loose in Victoria's Beacon Hill Park. For several years they grazed there peacefully and roamed the city freely. Some chronicles suggested that the pair roamed out of loneliness; other insisted they were bent on creating havoc by intentionally frightening residents wherever they went.

The remaining camels were herded aboard the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *Enterprise* and taken

British Columbia Archives

The only known photograph showing one of the Cariboo camels.

across the Strait of Georgia to New Westminster, where they were loaded onto a barge in tow of *The Flying Dutchman* for Harrison Lake. They then trudged on to Pemberton, where they were outfitted with trial loads of 350 pounds. Some were kept on this portage; the remainder carried on to Lillooet, where they were ferried across the Fraser River to begin a long and gruelling overland journey through the Fraser Canyon to Quesnel Forks.

In the nineteenth century the Fraser Canyon was justifiably feared for its winding, knife-edged trails seemingly cantilevered into the rock hundreds of feet above the rolling waters of the Fraser River. Had it not been for the smell of gold beckoning from the north in the early 1860s, most travellers would have seen fit at this point to retreat to gentler terrain. Even the explorer Simon Fraser wrote of the area in 1808: "I have been a long period among the Rocky Mountains, but have never seen anything like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture."

Little wonder that casualties were high in this area. In 1861 a miner described the fate of an entire mule train: "At Quesnel Forks we saw two packers return from the mines. One of them carried a bell, such as is fastened to the foremost mule of the packtrain. They told us they had started out from here to Antler Creek with a train of 30 animals but everyone [*sic*] had fallen into the precipitous ravines along the perpendicular sides over which the narrow trails led them."

It was to this country that camels were introduced, and for their investors the first signs of trouble came soon. With the exception of the largest camel, Barnum, the beasts could not manage the loads that Laumeister had hoped for. Even more ominously, their two-toed feet, perfectly adapted for desert travel, were no match for the mile after mile of rugged terrain over which they struggled.

British Columbia Archives

A packtrain leaves 150 Mile House, late nineteenth century. The photograph has been attributed to Richard Maynard of Victoria.

North of Lillooet they were required to labour up and down the steep sides of Pavilion Mountain, elevation 4,000 feet. Their tender pads became so sore and swollen that they were quickly reduced to inching up the mountain on battered, bloodied knees. In an attempt to ease their distress, some of the more sympathetic handlers fashioned home-made canvas and rawhide shoes for them. These, however, were almost immediately reduced to shreds.

A traveller to the area in May, 1862, noted in his diary: "We landed at half-past eight and walked three and a half miles to Lillooet. Ten camels were packing for this village from the lake. They were very poor and very weak, and when forced to kneel down to receive their loads, would utter a mournful cry."

Equally troublesome to the investors was the explosively negative reaction of the mules to the presence of the camels. Years later a *Vancouver Province* article quoted Kipling's wry observation on the camel's "halitosis and other evidences of a lack of personal daintiness", and recollected that the Cariboo camels were so offensive even the mule "without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity refused to fraternize".

A mule train usually consisted of 16 to 48 animals lead by a bell animal, often a white mare. Instead of a pack saddle, a leather, straw-filled sack known as an aparajo was tightly girded onto each mule's back. Upon this was lashed 250-400 pounds of freight. The mules were not attached to each other, and each usually knew its place in the train. Handlers included a cook, a superintendent known as the cargodore or mule skinner, and one man for every eight animals.

Mules could sense camels in the area long before the two trains came into contact on the trails. To have camels and agitated mules passing each other on the rattlesnake pathways was extremely treacherous and frequently resulted in fully-loaded mules plummeting down the canyons to death on the rocks below. It is recorded that one camel also met its demise in such an encounter, and in so doing committed "the unpardonable sin of toppling down the canyon wall with a full load of Scotch whisky".

The discord was by no means limited to the trails: "If mules and horses were stabled within hailing distance of the camels there was so much whinnying and braying all through the night that the camp became a Noah's Ark nightmare and no one got any sleep." Tents, laundry hung to dry, soap — almost anything chewable could and often did become the casualty of the camels' appetite and placid curiosity.

The mulepackers' initial annoyance over the mayhem rapidly gave way to anger, and then to threats of lawsuits if the camels were not immediately removed from the Cariboo. There was talk of organizing a petition to have the colony's Chief Justice, Matthew Baillie Begbie, order the camels removed from the trails. According to the British Columbia Archives, however, no evidence exists to substantiate that such an order was ever issued.

It seems more likely that the camels were taken off the trails a few months after their arrival simply because they proved to be an unsatisfactory means of transportation. Their ineptitude for the task quickly became so obvious that one train of eight camels was turned out and left to fend for themselves at Lac La Hache after only their second trip. That same winter they perished in a

blizzard, a mound marking their mass grave for many years afterward.

Several camels were taken back to the United States where they fetched a paltry average price of $35. Of those remaining in the Cariboo, six were recruited to work in the woods. Local legend has it that a stage driver named Walter attempted to perform the impossible by teaming a camel with a mule to pull his plough. Another camel was traded for a mule by the Indians of the Nicola Band and then destroyed soon after because of its propensity for biting.

One camel was shot for continually taking down rail fences. Another became a casualty when it was mistaken for a grizzly bear by a man named John Morris who had presumably not ever seen either before.

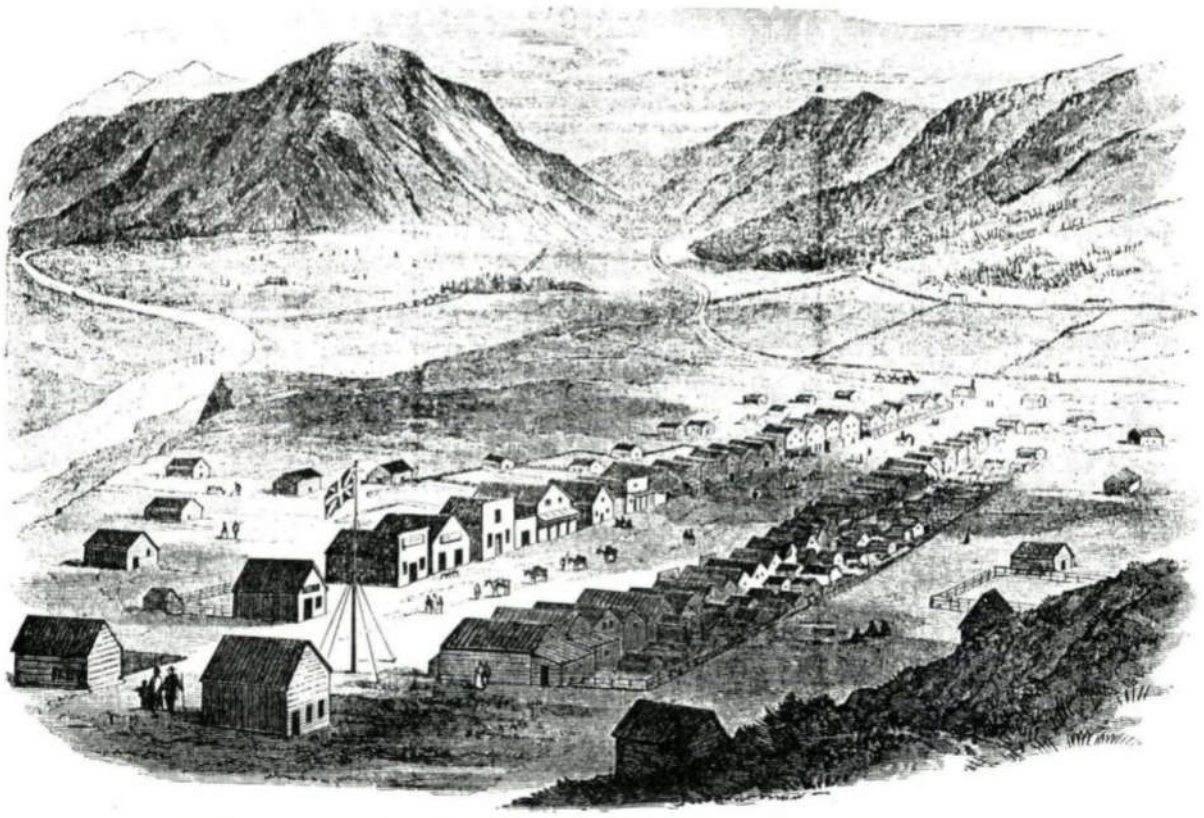
An enterprising saloon and restaurant at 150 Mile House tried serving camel meat to its customers, with little success. Neither was it popular in Kamloops where the Hudson's Bay Company store paid $60.60 for 404 pounds of camel meat. Further south in Fort Steele, however, an abandoned camel butchered by famished settlers one hard winter was proclaimed to be "delicious when fried".

Henry Ingram, one of the three members of the infamous and by-now-dissolved camel syndicate, eventually migrated to an area southeast of Kamloops, bought a ranch there, and took six camels home with him. These beasts were more fortunate than the rest; they were used for some ranch work and lived out their years in undisturbed peace.

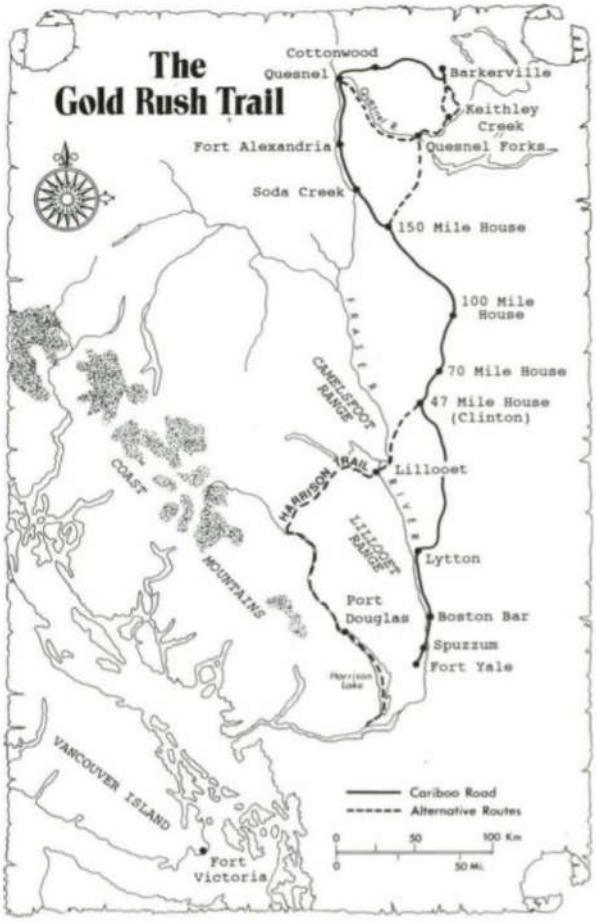
Reports vary as much as 20 years as to when the last survivor died. One source cites 1888 as being the year the camels became extinct in the Cariboo. Others claim the last camel on the Ingram ranch, an aged female, leaned up against a tree and died in 1905.

As for Heffly and Laumeister, the other two members of the doomed syndicate, both had the added misfortune of meeting with untimely deaths. Heffly collapsed suddenly in 1871 while walking up Victoria's Yates Street, and Frank Laumeister reportedly fell from a San Francisco Bay ferry and drowned. A less dramatic account of Laumeister's death reports him as having met his end in Tombstone, Arizona, in the late 1870s.

In retrospect, it is plausible to conclude that the camel experiment was destined for failure even before the ink had dried on the syndicate plan. That the unfortunate and unsuspecting Bactrians had little chance in the alien world of British Columbia's interior in the



Pack animals move along the only street in Lillooet, from "The Illustrated London News", 1864. The lead animal slightly resembles a camel but is more likely a loaded mule.



1860s now seems painfully clear. In a frontier land where the gleaming motherlode exacted an onerous and merciless toll on miners, settlers and pack animals alike, the camels were not much more than extra numbers on an ever burgeoning casualty list.

The syndicate plan seems to have been based more on the desire for instant wealth and less on the principles of sound planning. The investors were reassured by Americans eager to sell surplus camels in poor health that camels needed no extra feed and could recycle their own water indefinitely. Cariboo records show that while horses and mules were generally adequately watered and fed, the Cariboo pack camels were largely left to forage along the trail.

An excerpt from an article, dated 1862, printed in the *British Columbian* newspaper supports this premise: "While they carry from 500 to 600 pounds at a load, being double that of a mule, their keep costs little or nothing as they pick up all they require by the wayside, no small consideration when feed is from 6 to 7 cents a pound."

Years later, more than one old-timer could be found to insist that the camels' chief difficulties has arisen out of a chronic lack of water.

The syndicate also seems to have given little thought to the handling of the camels. Other than the "Live Turk" who disembarked with the camels in Victoria and who drew almost as many curious onlookers as did the Bactrians themselves, no mention of trained handlers or training for packers exists in the records. In short, no one seems to have been much preoccupied with the handling and well-being of the animals. Yet all the stakeholders readily placed their confidence in the camels' legendary prowess.

The three investors had made only scant provision for the animals' rest and recuperation following the long journey from Asia via San Francisco. And how compromised would the health of the camels have been at this point? Of the 44 camels that left Asia in October, 1861, 24 had perished before reaching San Francisco. "This was due to the lack of stalls in which to place them, to the scarcity of feed, and to the cruel treatment given them. Most of the survivors of this gruelling voyage were sent on to Victoria.

An earlier shipment of camels to San Francisco, having endured the same voyage from Manchuria, was tersely described by a local reporter upon arrival as being "lean, meagre and with their double humps shrivelled down to mere skinny sacks, which hung in flabby ugliness over their sides." It is reasonable to assume the camels disembarking at Victoria were in a similar state of deterioration.

Today there are no visible signs in the Cariboo region to suggest that the mighty Bactrian camel once toiled there. The last of the bleached camel bones have quietly deferred to time; the last of the pioneers who remember the unusual beasts of burden are no more. The frenzy of the gold rush has long since waned; a century of seasons has witnessed the dramatic metamorphosis of boom towns to tourist towns such as Barkerville, and ghost towns such as Quesnel Forks.

Few, though, would argue that the unpretentious camel, stranded in a foreign land more than a century and a quarter ago, has not earned a rightful place in the colourful Cariboo story. ◆

Trudy Duivenvoorden Mitic is a Victoria freelance writer. Her article on Halifax's Pier 21 appeared in the February/March 1995 issue of "The Beaver".

BERLIN, 1936

Canadian Dancers at Hitler's Olympics

By JOHN AYRE

When the chairman of the Canadian Olympic Committee, P.J. Mulqueen, was organizing the Canadian team for the 1936 Berlin Olympics, he had the quixotic idea of filling out the team with performing artists. The previous Olympiad in Los Angeles, in fact, had featured medal-round competitions in art, sculpture, music, architecture and literature.

The German organizers, though, were looking for an even wider scope in Berlin and added various categories of music and dance. The dance event in particular was designed as a major International Dance Festival by the leading figure of European modern dance, Rudolf von Laban, tireless organizer of dance festivals and the teacher of leading European choreographers Mary Wigman and Kurt Jooss.

The Germans were promising everything. There would be a gathering of major dance groups from around the world which would include all traditions: balletic, contemporary and folkloric. Backed by full orchestras and professional stage crews, the dance troupes would compete in two major downtown Berlin theatres, the Volksbuhne and the German Opera House, and then present a gala performance just before the opening of the athletic Olympics on 1 August.

Although the invitation seemed to be a ticket to Terpsichorean paradise, it is one that might have found its way into Mulqueen's wastepaper basket. Normally Canada would not have had a respectable entrant. In spite of the Depression and basic Canadian philistinism there were signs of life in the ballet world. In Toronto Russian ballet dancer and teacher Boris Volkoff was having quite spectacular success in staging productions with the best of his students. Since 1931, Volkoff's dance concerts at Hart House Theatre and the Eaton Auditorium had been solidly attended and critically acclaimed. Volkoff and his dancers were on their way to becoming local stars.

The interest in his group grew phenomenally. In 1934, the inaugural year of Promenade Concerts at the 5,600-seat Varsity Stadium, Volkoff choreographed and staged dances for an October appearance with conductor Reginald Stewart. The performance, featuring Volkoff's short ballets *The Magic Flute* and the dance of the clowns from *The Snow Maiden* was so mobbed that the ushers had to lock the turnstiles after 7,589 entered. An estimated 2,500 people had to be turned away outside and about 2,000 inside sat on the ground. The critics of all four Toronto newspapers raved. Augustus Bridle of the *Star* claimed that it was "the greatest crowd that ever listened to an orchestra concert in Canada". The *Telegram* critic claimed "the audience wanted more and yet more of this characteristic and beautiful work of Boris Volkoff and his students".

It didn't seem to matter that Volkoff had never taken his little company beyond the Toronto city limits. When Mulqueen came calling, Volkoff agreed that he should take his best students to compete at Berlin.

The bright vision of Berlin was clouded by major complications. There was the question of financing overseas travel in the depths of the Depression when the cost for each dancer would amount to $360. The 12 dancers, all of whom were amateur, would have to pay their own way, pry it out of their parents or find patrons. More worrisome was the image of the Berlin Olympics as a specifically Nazi event. Since 1933 Nazi abuse of Jews, their book-burning and attacks on contemporary culture had been front-page news.

The threats of boycotts marred the credibility of both the athletic and cultural events. Martha Graham, whom von Laban had invited to represent the United States in the dance competition, refused to go, citing worry that her many Jewish dancers might be at risk in

Janet Baldwin Collection

Pass issued to Boris Volkoff by German authorities for the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Berlin. Dancers from other countries refused to go as well. J. Lewitan, the Berlin correspondent for London's *The Dancing Times*, later reported on the general reluctance: "the really important dance nations, such as England, France, America, Sweden, and Russia were not represented at all."

While the boycotts were commendable, there was also the stance of those who chose to face down politics. American sprinter Jesse Owens made a farce of Nazi racial ideology simply by showing up and winning gold medals before an embarrassed Hitler. As a Russian who had defected from the Moscow State Ballet in China in 1924, Volkoff had no great love of Communists, but he had no particular Fascist sympathies either. He simply saw Berlin as a wonderful opportunity to promote Canadian dance. He knew that the best way to capture Canadian attention was to win international recognition.

Volkoff started working on new repertoire to fill competition requirements for "ballet dances, dances for the concert stage, historical and national dances". The latter two categories were problematic. Although he had entertained Toronto audiences with folkloric Russian dances, they were hardly characteristic of Canada. The idioms of Scottish and Irish dancing likewise seemed too foreign. Although he would explore the area of Canadian folk dance later in his ballet *The Red Ear of Corn* in 1948, in 1936 he thought he should dig deeper to a more fundamental identity, that of the North American Indian. This was common enough at the time. Ted Shawn in *Xochitl* and Martha Graham in *Ceremonials* were, with varying success, drawn to native themes which at the time seemed somehow deeper and more authentic to America.

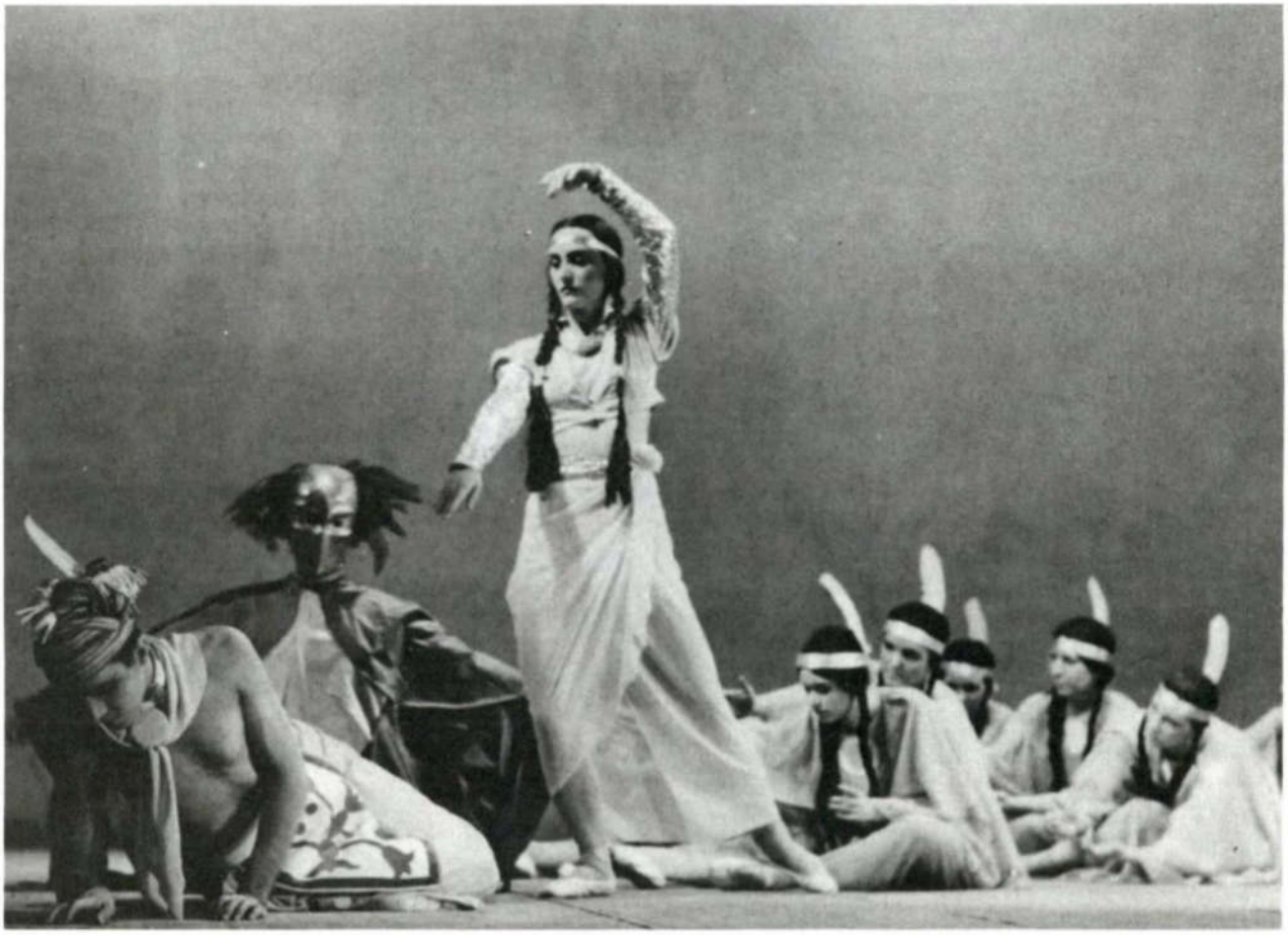
Volkoff's fiancée, dancer Janet Baldwin, travelled up to Ottawa to consult National Museum anthropologist Marius Barbeau. Barbeau was a compulsive collector of stories and had a particular fascination with native Orpheus and Eurydice tales, some 150 versions, which were similar to the ancient Greek tale. Barbeau was deeply pessimistic about the future of native society and promoted the use of its apparently dying culture. In 1928 he had coaxed Ernest MacMillan out to the Nass River on the British Columbia coast to record and adapt native songs. He encouraged many artists such as Emily Carr, A.Y. Jackson and Edwin Holgate to record Pacific Indian visual culture and now he encouraged Boris Volkoff. "Cultural appropriation" had no negative connotations then.

Out of the consultations with Barbeau and with Toronto anthropologist T.F. McIlwraith came *Mon-Ka-Ta*, a first attempt at a major Canadian ballet. The narrative, said to be based on a version of the Orpheus myth, was simple enough. A young man who wants his dead wife back consults "four wise women from the four corners of the world". Dressed as masked elders, they tell him how to go about it. One gives him a feather to reach the underworld quickly and a box to carry his soul. He is not to look back, or touch his wife. A shaman with a genuine turtle-shell rattle from the Caledonia reserve dances a solo around the husband as he mentally prepares for his guest. In the underworld his wife struggles out of an imprisoning circle of souls to reach him. When they dance together ecstatically, however, he forgets himself and touches her and she turns into a log.

Typically, the design was more inspired by pan-Indian clichés than by anthropology. For the Indian "maidens", designer Ronald McCrae borrowed the Hollywood device of head bands with a single vertical feather at the back. They wore diaphanous nightgown-like costumes. For the seven identically dressed warriors, there were the ubiquitous Plains Indian war bonnet and painted quill breast piece. With their faces, arms and legs all bare, it was obvious to anyone in the audience that the warriors, out of necessity, were all women.

The shaman and wise women who divided life and the underworld came off more authentically. Art students at Central Technical School under artist Elizabeth Wyn Wood made a set of Pacific Indian masks for them as well as a gargantuan Kwakiutl-style totem pole fourteen feet high with outstretched wings nine feet across. Throughout the final rehearsals when a 110°F heat wave hit Toronto, the dancers wilted under the ominous glower of the stylized owl-like spirit bird on top of the pole. Intended to be a dramatic show-piece for their performance in Berlin, it was left at home as too costly to send.

The music, an orchestration of bits from Erik Satie,



Metro Toronto Reference Library

A scene from the Indian ballet "Mon-Ka-Ta". The three principal figures, left to right, are James Pape, Janet Baldwin and Bunny Lang.

Bela Bartok and Indian songs recorded by Barbeau, was not predominantly native. The score appears not to have survived. Its dissonant modernism played on a sense of primitive mystery and definitely put greater demands on dance audiences more used to the easy romanticism of Tchaikovsky and the romantics.

Volkoff added a short "Eskimo solo" inspired by a 1933 Rockwell Kent print of an old Greenland woman apparently executing a "pagan dance". Like *Mon-Ka-Ta* the theme of the dance, called *Mala*, was a dangerous quest. Volkoff matched the Kent image with a Greenlandic narrative of a shaman travelling undersea in a time of famine to plead with the sea goddess Sedna to release sea mammals to the starving hunters. Although the story, common all over the east and central Arctic, was told as part of oral Inuit culture, it was never danced in the form of ritual or mythic retelling. Since traditional Inuit dances tended to be rhythmic drum dances or improvisations, Volkoff was taking liberties in the way Shakespeare imagined witches circling in their covens. The misshapen face of Rockwell Kent's crone became a Kabuki-like mask with a fixed mad look with wide white eyes. Dancing the shaman, Pauline Sullivan twisted and turned to a dissonant Pacific Indian challenge song adapted by Ernest MacMillan.

Volkoff balanced the programme with more conventional work including a group ballet *Ecstasy* to the music of Tchaikovsky. This was more familiar territory as was a pas de deux with a Death and Maiden theme danced by Janet Baldwin and Jim Pape. As a crowd-pleaser he also devised a polka to Strauss's *Pizzicato Polka* for his most technically accomplished student, 15-year-old Joan Hutchinson.

For amateur dancers who held down day jobs or went to school, the regime of rehearsals was onerous. Volkoff started them in April for the first Hart House concert at the end of May. Tempers frayed as Volkoff seemed determined that his little company would shine in Berlin. It would not be easy. Although he publicly praised the quality of his dancers he knew that most would need incessant rehearsal in order to overcome their difficiencies. Nevertheless, Volkoff was optimistic. Writing as they left, a *Toronto Star Weekly* writer

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The Volkoff company in Berlin. Pictured, left to right, are Boris Volkoff, Helen Pritchett, Jack Lemen (partly hidden), Margaret Clemens, Janet Baldwin, Mildred Wickson, Marsden Hall, Mary Wilder, Billie Cochrane, Joan Hutchinson, Clara Ord, James Pape and Pauline Sullivan.

suggested that the Volkoff group was aiming to be first among amateurs.

In Toronto at the end of May the Olympic programme garnered rave reviews. Augustus Bridle of the *Toronto Daily Star* was enthusiastic. He called *Mon-Ka-Ta* "a feat of technicalized pageantry with many group movements of startling originality and cleverly visualized rhythm". The need for money lasted until the very end and even though Volkoff contributed $1,200 of his own money, the hat was passed at a performance two days before the group left on 10 July. The shortfall was now down to $60.

The group travelled to Quebec City for the third class (steerage) voyage on the *Empress of Britain*. In mid-Atlantic with rolling seas, the company put on four solos in the ship's ballroom, including *Esquimau Dance* (*Mala*) and *Petite Polka*.

When the group arrived by train at Berlin's Friedrichstrasse station they were met by a brass band and a military officer. With a huge swastika banner fluttering overhead, they assembled outside to hear military music and were then delivered in military vehicles to homes in central Berlin for billeting. Although Volkoff and Janet Baldwin and three of the girls were put up in style in a five-storey home, Baldwin felt they were deliberately confined and kept away from ordinary Berliners. They were told to stay close to the theatres, restaurants and their accommodation and not to wander. Besides their red Olympics blazers with a maple leaf on the breast pocket, they carried Olympic identification photo cards which they had to produce on demand.

While dancers noticed a few signs of trouble — the taped-up broken windows of Jewish-owned department stores for example — they were generally soothed by the outward order and politeness of Berliners. Berlin in fact was now one huge village. Goebbels had ordered it cleaned up and beautified for the Olympics. Anti-Semitic signs were taken down and the coarsest Nazi literature banned.

When Volkoff touched base with the dance organizers, he was shocked to discover that the amateur spirit of the athletic Olympics did not extend to the cultural events. When he complained to the organizers, they quietly reassured him that it had been decided beforehand that the competition was not going to be rigorously judged. With groups and soloists widely ranging from the folkloric through ballet to modern dance there was almost no way to create enough categories to properly compare them. Everyone would get a diploma. It was clear too that the chief organizer, Rudolf von Laban, really preferred the concept of a *tanzfestspiele* (dance festival) rather than a *tanzwettspiele* (dance competition)

Pauline Sullivan dancing "Mala", Berlin 1936.

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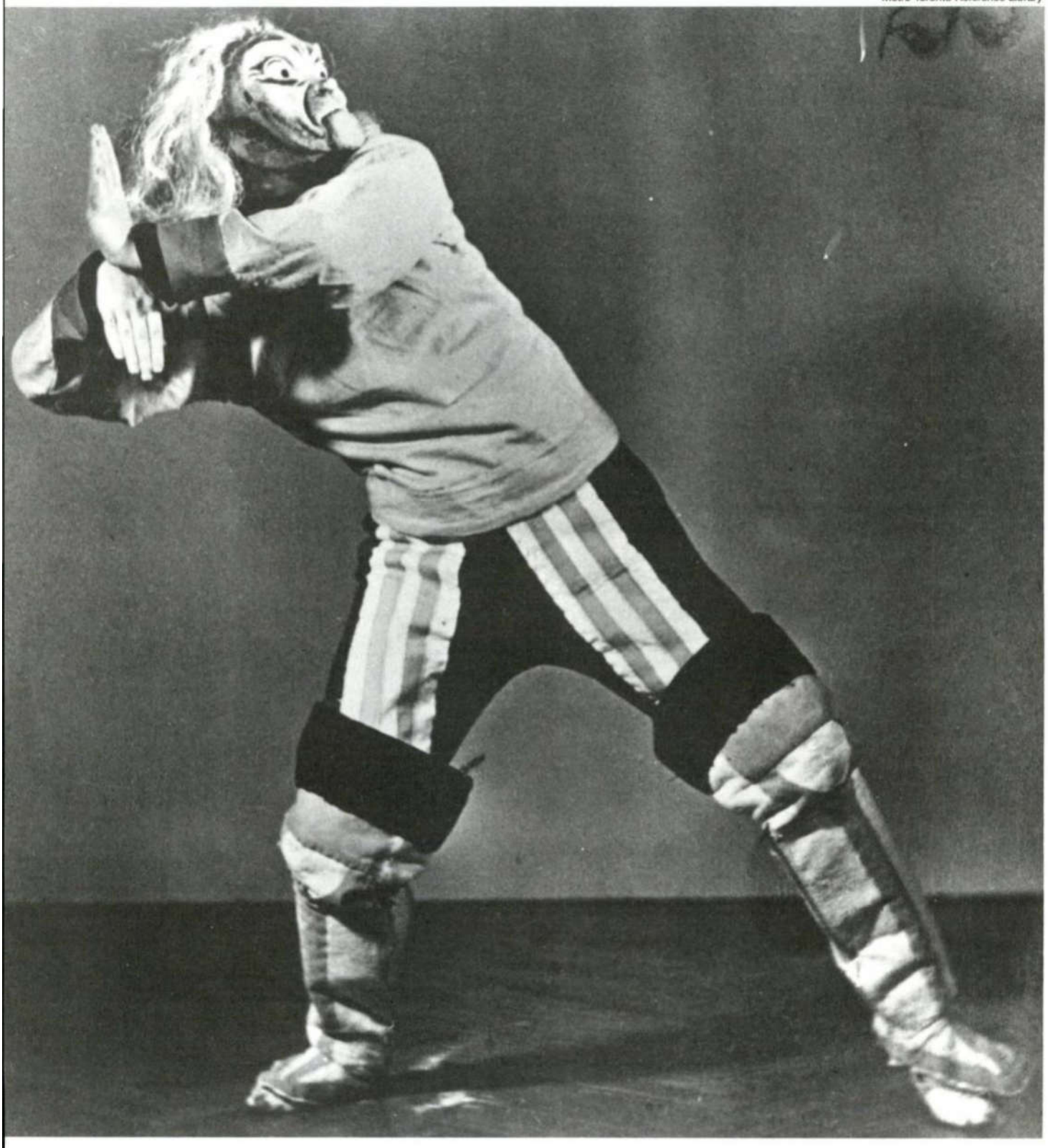

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The Volkoff company dances across a Toronto park in 1940, led by Volkoff himself.

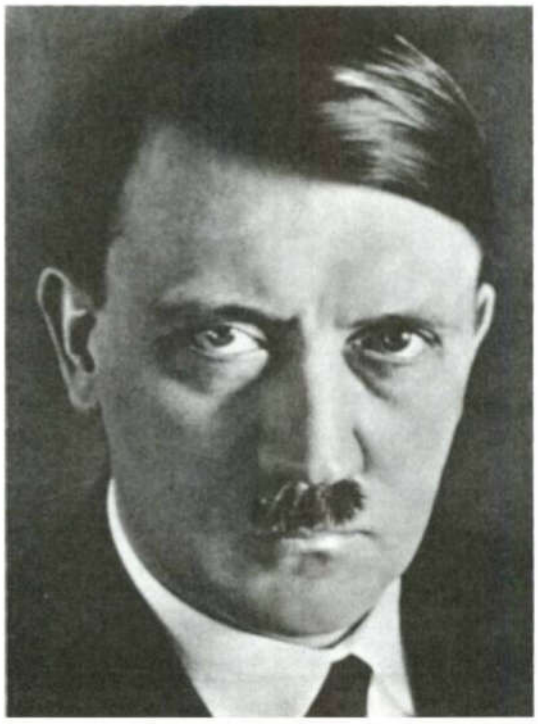
which, the Nazis had hoped, would bring easy glory to the predominant German groups.

Volkoff's anger also had to do with his own role as a dancer. He had counted himself out of the pre-Olympics concerts in Toronto and fully expected not to dance himself. Yet he had been wise enough to travel with a basic costume, his silk pantaloons, his soft knee-high boots, his Russian peasant shirt and his "lucky hat", a Red Army private's cap he claimed he had plucked off the head of a dead friend in the revolution. He quickly worked up his own routine, a "peasant dance" to music from Glière's *The Red Poppy*.

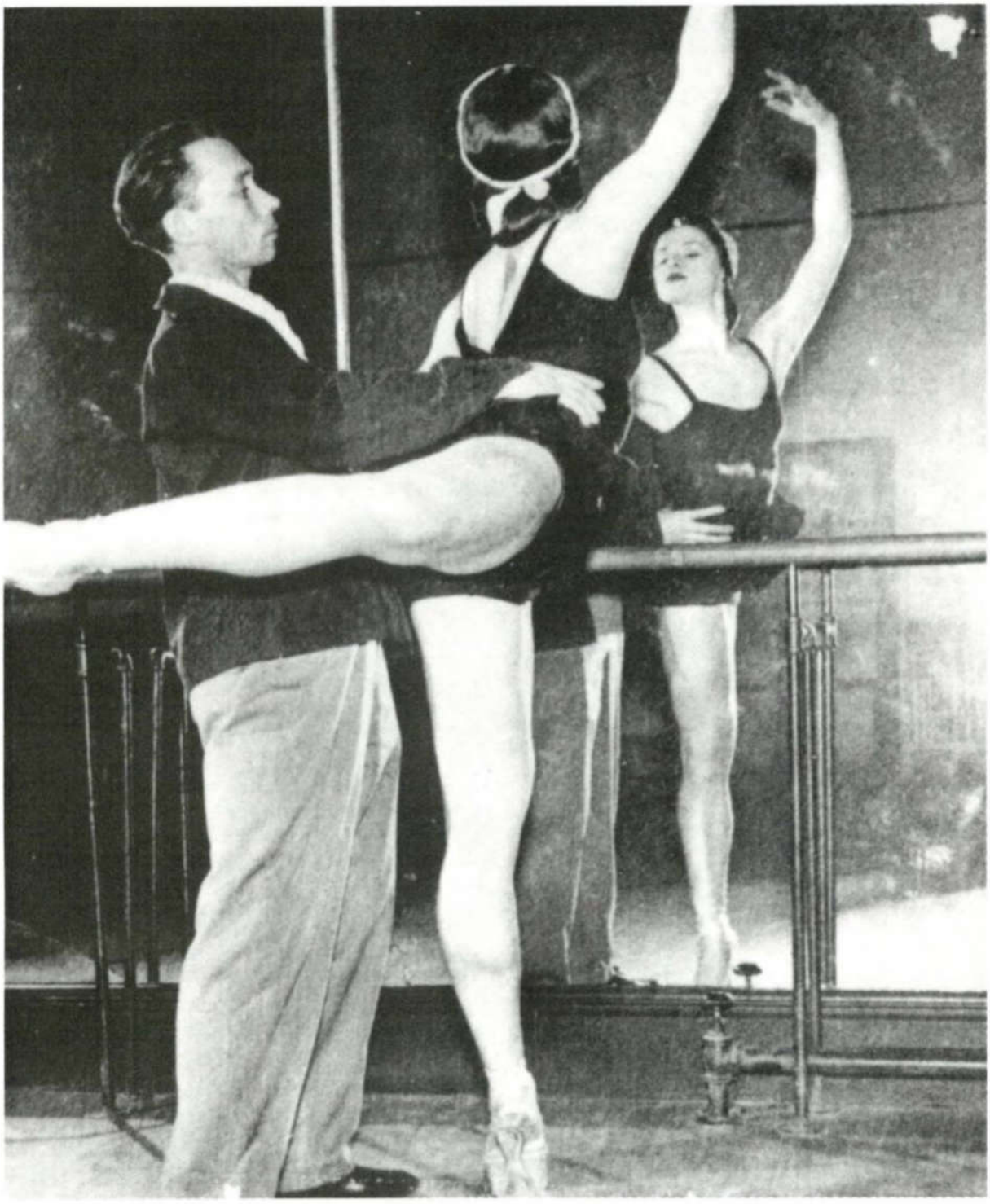
Against the over-representation of folkloric companies, from Central Europe there was the intimidating presence of the German contingent which included Mary Wigman and Harald Kreutzberg, who not only towered in European modern dance but had already enjoyed major New York seasons and toured North America. Wigman in particular, who had performed in Toronto in January 1932, was an idol of some members of the Volkoff group.

There was another unseen factor haunting the event: von Laban himself had already fallen terribly in the eyes of the Nazis. His major "movement choir" production, *Spring Wind and the New Joy*, was to open the Dietrich Eckart Amphitheatre on a wooded hillside just west of the Olympic Stadium, the day before the Olympics themselves opened. It had an amateur cast of hundreds and while the idea appeared wonderfully populist, it ran against the ideological line of the moment. Joseph Goebbels, who had endorsed conservative folkloric dance over two years before, attended von Laban's dress rehearsal on 20 June and took violent exception to the work. Goebbels banned further performances and made it clear the rehearsal itself was not even to be mentioned in the papers. Soon after the festival, von Laban was placed under house arrest. He was interrogated about his past and had to prove his "Aryan" ancestry.

From the luxury and calm of the opening reception at the Artist's House in the huge downtown Tiergarten, the Canadian dancers could not have imagined von



Hitler: A Nazi event.



Metro Toronto Reference Library

Volkoff with his pupil Mildred Herman, who later became famous as Melissa Hayden, star of the New York City Ballet.

Laban's plight. He kept his nerve and stood at the head of the reception line, graciously greeting the Canadians and other groups who enjoyed the evening with two orchestras and performances by Bavarian folk dancers who, after all, far better exemplified the taste of Goebbels than von Laban's own tradition of modern dance.

For the most part, the Volkoff dancers kept their minds — partly as the result of panic — on their rehearsals. If he had brought his company up to a superior amateur level, Volkoff decided that they must now try to make themselves professionally credible as well. In a photo shoot at the studio of top dance photographer, S. Enkelmann, they looked vibrant and ready. The photos of Sullivan in particular, as the witch-like shaman, are arresting.

The performance itself went off well. The audience was interested in *Mon-Ka-Ta* and *Mala* but saved their greatest enthusiasm for Joan Hutchinson in *Petite Polka*. The curtain went up and down eight times. Volkoff, who was normally remote with Hutchinson, embraced and kissed her with thanks. He himself gave a vibrant solo to music from Glière's *The Red Poppy*. One German critic noted "incredible vitality and dance passion". The applause would not die so Volkoff had to do an encore.

The four newspaper critics were nearly all in agreement. Three out of four critics panned *Ecstasy* and *Entrance* but all expressed interest in both *Mala* and *Mon-Ka-Ta*, which they called "elegant" and possessed of "beautiful clarity" in expressing the mythological theme. The critic of the major German dance journal *Der Tanz* (*The Dance*), Erwin Kroll, tried to place Volkoff's group in an amateur folkloric category. While he endorsed *Mon-Ka-Ta* and *Mala*, he attacked Volkoff's "art" ballets as "second-hand kitsch".

Von Laban announced at a reception at the end of the performances that the competition had now changed to a festival and handed out an array of diplomas, cups and medals so that almost everyone received an award.

Writing home from England where he stopped off to study at Kurt Jooss's new studio in Dartington Hall, Devonshire, Volkoff glowingly reported on the virtually valueless diploma, medal and silver cup. When he got home, he pressed for advantage and claimed a real David against Goliath victory, declaring his group had achieved a final fifth overall place against professional groups. Although it became one of the most repeated claims of his career, it was not true. Fifty-nine years later, Jim Pape admitted, "we understood it was non-competitive, but I think it was von Laban who told us that if we looked at different groups, he would feel we would place about fifth. It was an informal thing."

In rather garbled English, Volkoff called for a permanent ballet company and a repeat of the Berlin appearance in 1940 at the expected Tokyo Olympics. He tried to warn off opera organizers in Toronto who might draw energies away from the fledgling ballet: "a ballet is wanted; so is opera needed. But I see that, when we start opera in Canada, we sometimes divide the skin before we kill the animal." Most of all, he wanted the kind of artistic boldness and courage he did not much see on the national scene: "Those who dare to take liberties will go highest in the dance....Tradition is not enough....Here there is this bright country but people are too afraid to try, too afraid to seem foolish."

All he could manage himself was a small tour through Ontario, ending with a matinee and evening performance of the Olympic programme at Ottawa's Little Theatre in March 1937, under the patronage of the Governor General. This was the last time *Mon-Ka-Ta* and *Mala* were staged.

Volkoff used his Olympic profile to expand his work and popularity. In conjunction with the Toronto Opera Guild he choreographed the Venusberg ballet for 1937 performances of a very ambitious production of *Tannhauser*, and followed it at Christmas 1938 with the dream sequences of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. In November 1938 he announced he would set up a repertory company, and in May of the following year he premiered the "First Canadian Ballet" at Massey Hall. But the war intervened, and while his company continued to be very popular with Toronto audiences, he could neither tour extensively nor promise the best of his dancers such as Mildred Herman (later famous as Melissa Hayden) an honest professional future. His company was a major factor in the Dominion Dance Festivals in the late 1940s. The next and last time he took a troupe out of the country in Canada's name was to New York in mid-December 1949, for a Festival of Canadian Ballet in which his company performed another "Indian ballet", *The Red Ear of Corn*. Although he had long seen himself as the logical choice for the head of a new National Ballet, Toronto looked out of the country to Celia Franca in 1950 to start a different kind of company. While the National Ballet was eager to have his best dancers in its early years, it ignored his legacy to an almost insulting degree. Volkoff, increasingly bitter, died nearly forgotten in 1974. ◆

John Ayre of Guelph, Ontario, writes on Canadian cultural history. He completed this article under the auspices of the Maclean Hunter Arts Journalism Program at the Banff Centre.

Planting the Seeds of Dance

By Max Wyman

TORONTO DANCE TEACHERS 1825-1925

By Mary Jane Warner, Dance Collection Danse Press/es, 145 George Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2M6. 100 pp., illus. $24.95.

To the self-styled "Professor" John Freeman Davis, an Oakville shoemaker-cum-publican's son who became Toronto's leading dance teacher in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, teaching dance was first and foremost a business — and one at which he excelled.

Here is a sample of his advertising, from the *Globe* in 1905:

If you're wise you'll learn
to dance
From the man who can
advance
Ideas, Practical and
Up-to-date
Then with common sense
and reason
You will learn more this
season
Than you're able now to
calculate.

By that time Davis was 70; he had taught in Toronto for 50 years, and had seen the city's population swell to over 200,000 (from 30,000 in 1850). When he retired from teaching, shortly before his death in 1916, he claimed that 30,000 of those citizens had passed through the doors of his various academies. They would climb the stairs to his gas-lit studio in the 1870s to be taught etiquette and the latest dance styles (often to Davis's own musical compositions, the first of which, *The Great Pacific Lancers*, recognized British Columbia's entry into Confederation) and, in later years, make their way to his home on

Wilton Avenue, where his curriculum of "ultra-fashionable dancing" in 1908 reflected the new fad for Orientalism in a teaching method called the "Siva Davis," named for the Hindu god of dance.

Opportunistic he may have needed to be, both to attract students and to compete in an increasingly crowded marketplace (at one point, his son set up a school in direct competition), but his abilities seem to have been unquestionable: along with his topical musical creations (such as *The Prairie Settlers' Song*, *The Call to Arms Polka*, *The Lawn Tennis Dance* and *A Corker Bicycle Song*) he also created his own modifications of popular dances, published a book on social dancing and, in 1900, crowned his career with a Grand Prize Diploma for dancing at the Paris Exhibition.

Davis dominated the Toronto dance-teaching scene for decades (one interloper from Ottawa found the competition too much, and was forced to stop teaching and become a newspaper reporter).

He was, however, by no means the first: one of the great values of *Toronto Dance Teachers, 1825-1925* is the way it demonstrates the growth of interest and activity in the artform in the 100 years under examination.

We are taken from the assembly balls of the early settlers (who always provided a ready market for tuition in "the Newest and Pretty" social dances) to the Yonge Street academy of the French-trained Henri Bouxary (a fat man who one contemporary said "had to change his linen twice or thrice a day, the result of excessive perspiration," and whose Toronto years were marked by tragedy when the muslin costume of the 14-year-old Rosa Cook, playing a fairy in his 1855 Christmas pantomime *The Enchanted Isle*, caught fire when the child passed too close to the stove that heated the backstage area, and she burned to death).

The 25-year contribution to the upgrading of Toronto's dancing skills by the courtly Augustin Noverre, grand-nephew of the famous French choreographer, Jean-Georges Noverre, is charted, along with the steady procession of immigrant and visiting teachers that culminated in the arrival in the early 1920s of the Russian ballet teachers Leonidoff and Vladmiroff, who helped prepare the ground for Boris Volkoff, Celia Franca and the beginnings of true dance professionalism in Toronto.

Mary Jane Warner's narrative is careful to set this story within a

succinct summary of the broader social development of the city. The progression from the days of Mrs. Cockburn, whose school for young ladies in 1822 included dancing as a subject alongside flower and card work and painting on velvet, to the enthusiasm for physical culture at the turn of the century, the long and distinguished career of the man Warner calls "the dancing philanthropist" Samuel Titchener-Smith, and Amy Sternberg's fantasy extravaganzas and CNE spectaculars of the early 1920s, offers a clear sense of the way an externally-imposed entertainment art slowly helped to stimulate interest in a deeper, more indigenous expression of the artform itself.

This book grew out of courses in Canadian dance history taught by Mary Jane Warner at York University, and several chapters are based on research undertaken by her students (perhaps the reason for the somewhat academic blandness of its style). Its specific Toronto orientation leaves little room for national context, its attention is specifically directed toward teachers of theatrical and ballroom dance, rather than teachers of folk dance, and, as Ms. Warner notes, the results are uneven: more information has been unearthed about some teachers than about others, and much research remains to be done.

As any historian will attest, however, it is precisely this tantalizing sense of mystery that provokes the kind of digging that produces the illuminating detail with which this modest book is filled. The story of the evolution of dance in this country is only in recent decades beginning to be told, and *Toronto Dance Teachers, 1825-1925* is an important step along our path toward a better understanding of that valuable expressive heritage.

Vancouver arts critic Max Wyman is author of "Dance Canada: An Illustrated History". He has also written a life of dancer Evelyn Hart and a history of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

A Lot of Moose in a Small Room

By Laird Rankin

NAMING CANADA
Stories about Place Names from "Canadian Geographic"

By Alan Rayburn. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994. 271 pp. illus. $19.00.

The term "bathroom book" is a recognized and accepted one that is not confined to the publishing trade. Decidedly not derisive, it identifies mainly non-fiction books that consist of concise, free-standing entries, those of about a page or two in length, that can be read piecemeal fashion at one's convenience. And at more than one sitting.

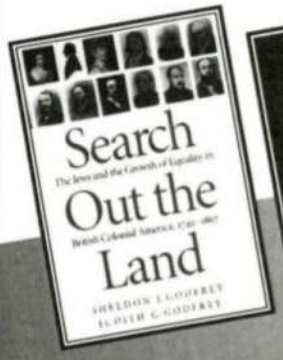
Naming Canada is a bathroom book in the best tradition of the term. But much more than that, it is also a book that informs *and* entertains, always a happy combination when it comes to history-telling, in this case the stories behind Canadian place names, an intriguing subject in its own right.

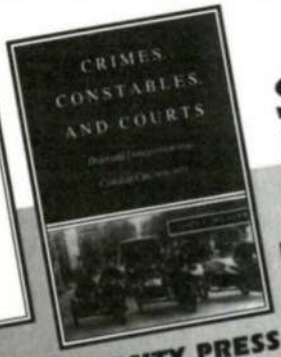
Rayburn is a professional geographer by trade who specializes in the study of place names. He has been writing the popular "Place Names" column in *Canadian Geographic* magazine since 1983. *Naming Canada* is a compilation of 60 of those columns. They are all over the map of Canada, from Acadia, Alberta, to Zone Mills, Ontario. In between, the pages are loaded with a "treasure trove of Canadian history and myth", quality trivia, vintage anecdotes and new-found facts. For instance, it is well known that Regina — that "Athens of the West" according to Canadian humorist Paul Hiebert — was originally called Pile of Bones. Or that Toronto is alias York (and a.k.a Hogtown in some circles.) But, it is less well known that Kenora, the name of the lakeside resort town in Northwest Ontario, is an acronym for Keewatin, Norman and Rat Portage. Or that in addition to being featured on coins and emblems, and immortalized by beer, the noble moose has been elevated to ubiquity status, with 631 place names in its honour. Witness Moose Jaw, Moose Factory, Moosonee and 628 others. More noble but less ubiquitous is Her Majesty Queen Victoria who trails by comparison. She comes in a distant second with only "more than 300" places to her credit. Still, she reigns supreme: there are no provincial capitals named after the moose.

In addition to a handy alphabetical listing of all the names in the book, Rayburn has grouped his columns into eight broad themes, such as names honouring individuals or families, political issues or language problems and so forth. The material has been well-honed. Engaging in its own right, it appears in book form in a "new and improved" fashion, enhanced by additional information and corrections that have come to light since the columns were originally published.

Some will be disappointed with this book when they look up the place of their choice only to find it omitted. Take heart, Rayburn is still writing his regular column. Another book would therefore seem inevitable. I, for one, can hardly wait to read what he has to tell about Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories.

Laird Rankin is Vice-President and Secretary of Canada's National History Society.





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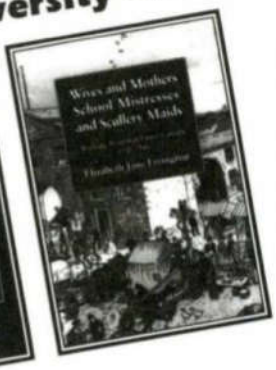

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From War to Peace

By Gavin Murphy

VICTORY 1945
Canadians From War to Peace

By Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., Toronto, 1995. 256 pp., illus. $35.00.

To help celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of victory in Europe and postwar peace in Canada, historians Desmond Morton and Jack Granatstein have produced another oversized commemorative book. This is the fourth collaboration by these two prolific writers and *Victory 1945* basically follows the same format as their earlier undertakings. It is a successful formula so why change?

The book focuses on life at the battle front and on the home front at the end of the Second World War. Between 1939 and 1945, Canada put over a million men and women into uniform, including 42 percent of its male population between the ages of 18 and 45. Most were volunteers. The price to pay for this contribution to victory was over 105,000 casualties.

This was a global conflict and the home front was also mobilized. Women replaced enlisted men on the shop floors and in the factories of industrial Canada. Repairing, recycling and reusing were all required — along with another "R" word — rationing. The domestic economy exploded, meeting the military's need for wartime production. There were shortages of consumer goods, but jobs for everyone with plenty of overtime available.

The government's propaganda machinery churned out newsreels and literature supporting the war effort. Commercial films like *Captains of the Clouds,* starring James Cagney, and comic books featuring Johnny Canuck, the arch-enemy of the Nazis, were produced.

Canada was put on alert for enemy agents. Anyone who questioned authority, or who appeared to be a potential risk to security, was under suspicion. Civil liberties were basically suspended. Communists, Japanese-Canadians and Nazi sympathizers were rounded up and incarcerated. Montreal's mayor Camillien Houde was jailed for speaking out against conscription. Draconian as these measures were, many Canadians supported them at the time as necessary to win the war.

Victory in Europe marked a watershed for Canada. The country emerged as one of the world's Middle Powers, victorious in war and prepared to take its place at the United Nations. Some claim this was Canada's finest moment. But was it? The authors also examine the problems associated with victory.

Veterans returned to a different Canada from the one they had left. Some never became integrated into the peacetime economy. The ties with Britain were loosening and Canada looked to closer links with the United States. The postwar boom did not mean prosperity for all. There were chronic housing shortages and industrial strikes were common, most notably at the Ford Motor Co., of Windsor, Ontario, in 1945.

Recognizing the reality of postwar Canada, the federal Liberals of Mackenzie King embraced social reform and went on to win the 1945 election (although King lost his own Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, riding to the CCF). The Liberals were supported because many Canadians believed a government that won the war could also secure a prosperous peace.

Victory 1945 contains a wealth of intriguing anecdotes about this remarkable period in Canadian history. It is presented in an easy-to-read style and includes several one-page features on subjects ranging from the bomber offensive to Victory Loans. *Victory 1945* contains about 200 photographs, including many from private collections that have never been published before. There are also excellent full-colour reproductions of wartime posters and art work.

It is unfortunate that a book celebrating Canada was printed and bound in the United States. As well, the poor-quality dye used on the covers leaves the reader's hands covered in blue ink. But these criticisms relate to production and are not a reflection on the book's contents.

Victory 1945 is a nostalgic look at Canada. The authors conclude that the country, buoyed by its impressive war effort, came of age in 1945. This book effectively captures the mood of Canadians during this giddy time. I hope there will be further joint efforts from these gifted Canadian story-tellers.

Gavin Murphy, an Ottawa lawyer, has contributed reviews and articles to a number of Canadian magazines.

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Nominations are now being accepted for the 1996 Pierre Berton Award. In addition to a name and address of the nominee, nominations must be accompanied by detailed information in support of the candidate. A biography or curriculum vite, newspaper or magazine articles, or letters of support outlining the achievements of the nominee would be welcome.

Nominations for the 1996 Pierre Berton Award must be received by May 30, 1996

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Books Received

We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up. By Peggy Bristow et al. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 248 pp. illus. $45 hardcover; $20 paper.

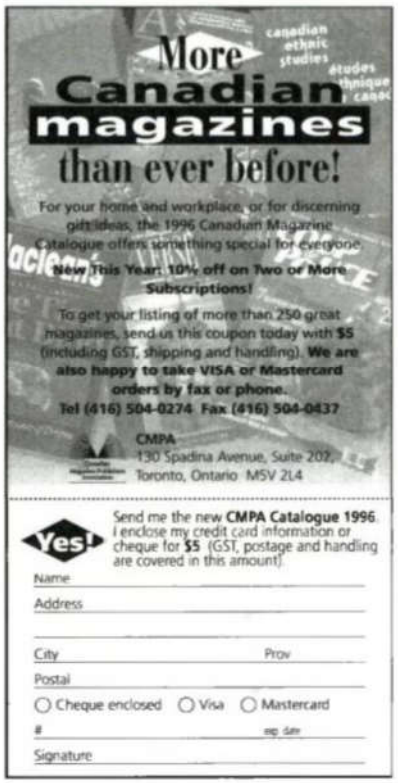
Sources of the River: Tracking David Thompson Across Western North America. By Jack Nisbet. Raincoast Books, Vancouver. 288 pp. illus. $30.95 hardcover; $17.50 paper.

Ninety-Nine Days: The Ford Strike in Windsor, 1945. By Herb Colling. NC Press, Toronto. 197 pp. illus. $19.95.

Renfrew Gold: The Story of a Nova Scotia Ghost Town. By John Hawkins. Lancelot Press, Hantsport, Nova Scotia. 119 pp. illus. $7.95.

Ketchum's Folly. By Jay Underwood. Lancelot Press, Hantsport, Nova Scotia. 133 pp. illus. $8.95.

The Ship That Voted No: And Other Stories. By Tony Keene. Lancelot Press, Hantsport, Nova Scotia. 86 pp. illus. $7.95.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THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

Visitors to the McCord Museum in Montreal can see this "art deco" hood ornament from a 1925 Packard car in an exhibition running until 6 September. The show is called "Daring Deco: Styles and Lifestyles" and covers the period 1925-1939, featuring items from artwork to textiles in the "art deco" style.

The So-Called 'Battle of Pakenham'

While welcoming Bernard Shaw's story of the Laird McNab [*The Beaver*, August/September 1995], I wish to make a correction and raise a question. My particular concern is McNab's alleged raising of the "20th Battalion of the Carleton Light Infantry" in response to the Rebellions of 1837. McNab's unit was actually styled the 2nd Regiment of Carleton Light Infantry, and it had been created by a Militia General Order dated 19 July 1836 — more than a year before the Rebellion.

There is no doubt that when McNab mustered his regiment late in 1837, some 70-80 settlers refused to serve under him; their protest and petition is in the National Archives of Canada. Nevertheless, I have grave reservations about the so-called "Battle of Pakenham", reputedly fought late in 1838 between factions loyal and opposed to Laird McNab. I have searched through militia papers and contemporary newspapers and found no mention of it.

The problem may lie with a source. Writers relating the Laird's story have often leaned heavily upon the recollections of Dugald McNab, who was aged 15-16 at the time of the rebellions but whose accounts were not published until 1870. The accuracy of writers like Alexander Fraser (*The Last Laird of McNab*) and Joan Finnigan (*Giants of the Ottawa Valley*) rests upon the reliability of Dugald McNab's memory, and he errs on the designation of the unit and the date of its being formed. Given his errors, I would feel more comfortable if an account of the "Battle of Pakenham" could be found in another source, close in time to the event itself; such an account (say in a contemporary letter) would put the Battle of Pakenham firmly in the camp of history rather than folklore.

Hugh A. Halliday,
Orleans, Ontario.

The 'Obnoxious and Arrogant' Macnab

I read Bernard Shaw's article on the Tyrant of the Ottawa Valley [*The Beaver*, August/September 1995] with considerable enjoyment and interest. My great-great-grandfather, James Carmichael, was one of the settlers who came to Canada on the *Niagara* and was forced to sign the contract. One of his daughters, Jean Rubena Hamilton Niagara Carmichael, my great-grandmother, was born on the high seas en route to Canada.

I have done a little research into my family and feel I should elaborate on several points of Mr. Shaw's article. The correct spelling of the name is Macnab. The "n" is not capitalized as it is simply a shortened version of the Celtic word "an". There is no name from which the clan name is derived. Most clan names are derived from the name of a famous ancestor, *i.e.*, MacGregor is the "son of Gregor".

My mother's surname was McLaren, *i.e.*, the son of Laurence who, incidentally, was also an abbot, the Abbot of Achtow at Balquhidder in the thirteenth century. The Celtic Church allowed their clergy to marry as do the Protestants today, therefore the question of celibacy is not an issue. It was only after the Roman Church gained in ascendancy that celibacy became the fashion. Since the abbots were powerful men in the district it is natural that their progeny would adopt their names.

If I may, I will say a few words on behalf of "the Laird". I am sure there is no doubt he was an obnoxious and arrogant person but was no different than most others of his class. The fact he held sway over his "tenants" for so long indicates the support he had in the Ontario government. He was not so corrupt as others of his class who actually sold their clansmen as slaves to plantation owners in the United States.

R.B. Shackleton,
Innisfall, Alberta.

Beaver Tokens

I am writing to ask assistance in obtaining two Hudson's Bay Company Brass "Made Beaver" tokens, one a ½ "Made Beaver" and the other a ¼ "Made Beaver" token, for a display on the Hudson's Bay Company at our museum.

If anyone can help me obtain these tokens I will be very thankful.

Robert Eddy,
306 Angier Avenue,
Cashmere, Washington 98815.
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Riel and the Death of Scott

What sort of nonsense is J.M. Bumsted foisting on us about Louis Riel and the killing of Thomas Scott? [*The Beaver*, June/July 1995]. Bumsted keeps referring to Scott's killing as an execution, and puts scornful quotation marks around the word murder, which was the way the event was frequently described at the time. My dictionary (*Oxford Universal*, 1995) defines execution as a killing that is "in pursuance of a judicial sentence". The dictionary also defines murder as "the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought". It is hard to imagine by what stretch of interpretation Scott's killing meets the definition of execution rather than of murder. What law was broken that carried the death penalty? In what manner was this law established? And in what way was a judicial determination made that the law had been broken?

Much is made of Scott's apparently being "violent and boisterous" and leading the other prisoners "to be vociferous in their complaints". But these characteristics and behaviour, even if true, were even then hardly a capital offence.

Moreover, the problem of Scott's behaviour could have been dealt with rather less bloodily by isolating Scott from the other prisoners. In any event, it's not surprising that the prisoners, led by Scott or otherwise, were being vociferous: as Bumsted seems to admit, they had broken no law but had been taken hostage — with all the vicious threat that entails.

One can easily sympathize with the Métis, and profoundly regret the tragedy that befell them. One can even understand the latter day desire of our political leaders to rehabilitate Riel. But we should not be asked by someone who is supposed to be an historian to dignify as an execution what was manifestly a murder.

H.B. Long,
Bowen Island, B.C.

RC not C of E

I was particularly interested in reading your August/September issue of *The Beaver* to see some coverage of the early days of Coppermine in the "Writers of History" section by Christopher Moore.

As accuracy is always an important ingredient in such reporting I thought I ought to point out one error which deserves correction.

The two missionaries who were killed in 1913, Fathers Guillaume LeRoux and Jean-Baptiste Rouviere were Roman Catholics of an Oblate Order, not Anglicans. Whilst both Churches have had their martyrs in various parts of the world, neither would wish to borrow from the other!

Apart from that and a few understandable inaccurate spellings of inuinaktun names, the review of the film *Coppermine* is insightful and commendable: thank you for including the feature in your excellent magazine.

John R. Sperry,
Bishop of The Arctic (retired),
Yellowknife, N.T.

The editor of "The Beaver" welcomes contributions to The Packet. Comments on articles, observations on historic events and fresh information from unpublished sources are particularly encouraged. Letters may be edited for length.

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Steamer *Northcote* at Fort Edmonton, 1875

BY PETER RINDLISBACHER

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The painting shows the famous Hudson's Bay Company vessel *Northcote* making its first visit to the HBC post at what is now the site of the city of Edmonton, Alberta, 10 years before the steamer's dramatic role at the Battle of Batoche in the North-West Rebellion.

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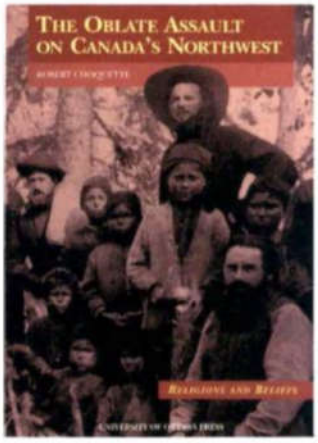
Looking Back: The Books of 1995

The first "Writers of History" of a new year is an occasion to look back — and sometimes to ask *Beaver* readers to look back — and consider the memorable books and films of the past year. Almost every year, I find it's worth noting what was on the shortlist of the Governor General's Award in non-fiction, for historians' books frequently make a good showing. This year, however, I had a different perspective. The Canada Council invited me to be one of the three jurors choosing the non-fiction award. Did that mean history took over the G-G shortlist entirely?

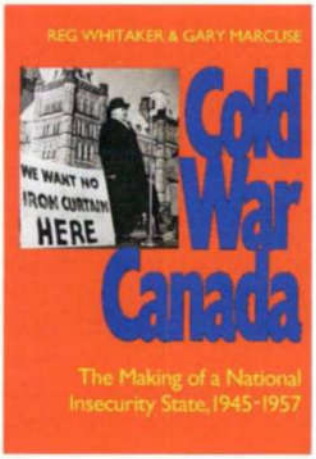


No, it didn't, in fact. Despite the presence of two historians on the jury — northern expert Ken Coates of British Columbia was the other — we agreed that the really striking writing this year was in other fields. In the end, no books of Canadian history made our shortlist.

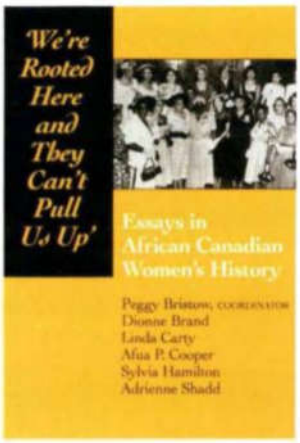
Not that the writers of history were taking a holiday last year. Histories were very well represented in the nearly 300 books we read and considered last summer. History professors, in particular. In fact the third member of our jury, writer Bronwyn Drainie, provoked some academic anger by declaring afterwards in her *Globe and Mail* column that most of the flood of some 90 titles from university presses (including quite a few history studies) were so specialized and limited in their audience that they hardly needed to be published as books. It's fair to say she was expressing a jury consensus — but it's also fair to point out that in the end the prize went to a professor who transcended her own field of specialization: Rosemary Sullivan, for *Shadow Maker*, her skillful, thoughtful, empathetic biography of doomed Toronto poet Gwendolyn MacEwan. In the end, it's the writing, not the affiliations of the writer or publisher, that matters.

No history this year persuaded us to squeeze it onto the shortlist, but looking over the books we considered, I still find a glorious depth and diversity of writing about the past of Canada and Canadians. The wealth of subjects available in Canada's past is matched only by the wealth of passion and talent being expended on it.

The year 1995 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and publishers responded with a flood of commemorations.


REG WHITAKER & GARY MARCUSE
WE WANT NO IRON CURTAIN HERE
Cold War Canada
The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957

There were surveys and picture-books, specialist studies of military weathermen, chaplains, prisoners, and ferry pilots, memoirs and oral testimony, and many more. One emerging genre, that of children and descendants of Holocaust victims now



coping with their own discoveries of and reactions to the horror, is nobly represented by Claudia Cornwall's *Letter From Vienna* and Eric Koch's *Hilmar and Odette*.

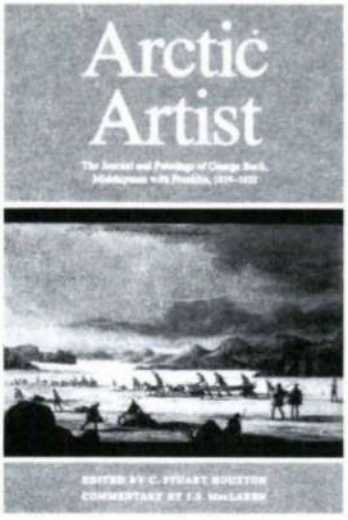
Two retrospectives on war that linger in my memory are studies in miniature. Wade Hemsworth, a young Hamilton journalist, wrote *Both My Legs: The Love Story of Howard Lovell* (Viking Penguin) about how his grandfather lost his legs and found the love of his life in wartime. And in *One Village One War* (Lancelot Press), veteran journalist Douglas How takes every name carved on the war memorial in his native Dorchester, New Brunswick, and sets out to find out what befell the boys behind those names in two wars and the depression in between. I still find myself thinking of it.

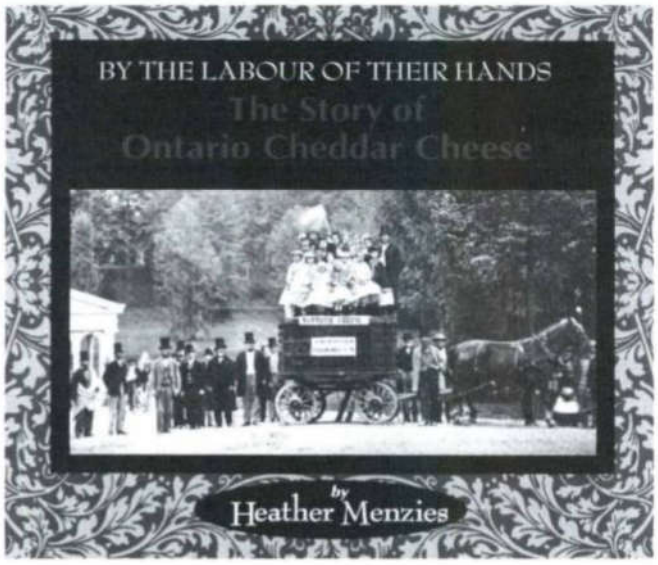
Military history provided the most substantial cluster of topics and titles. Native studies perhaps came second, with a significant number of

them coming from native writers like Gerald Alfred, at once an academic scholar and a Mohawk of embattled Kahnawake. All else was diversity.

The scholarly studies ranged astonishingly in subject (even though in method and prose that certain scholarly sameness often prevailed). Colin Howell's *Northern Sandlots* is "a social history of Maritime baseball". (William Humber, meanwhile, offers *Diamonds of the North*, on baseball's Canadian history) while Carolyn Strange's wonderfully titled *Toronto's Girl Problem* studies young women in the big city at the turn of the century. In *Cold War Canada*, Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse undertake a huge study of "the national insecurity state". In *Earning Respect*, Joan Sangster studies "the lives of working women" in small-town Ontario, while Suzanne Morton interprets domestic life in a 1920s suburb of Halifax. C. Stuart Houston has edited a spectacular edition of the arctic paintings and journals of nineteenth-century explorer George Back. Lillian Petroff celebrates the Macedonians of Toronto in *Settlers and Sojourners*. Robert Choquette examines *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*. Jan Noel explains nineteenth-century temperance crusaders in *Canada Dry*.

Some people we don't think of as historians contributed to our historical knowledge. Knowlton Nash



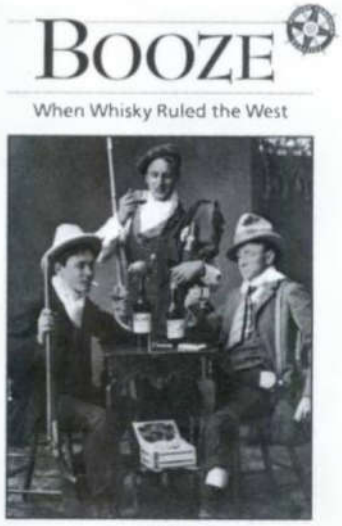


weighed in with a thick, detailed, slightly dispassionate history of the CBC: *Microphone Wars*. And Frank Cosentino, better known as a football coach, continues his studies of Canadian football history in the ironically-titled *A Passing Game*, a history of the now more beleaguered than ever Canadian Football League.

Local and community histories are strong every year and often little noticed in the mainstream press. I was impressed by Sarjeet Singh Jagpal's *Becoming Canadians*, an illustrated oral history of early Sikhs, and by *The Good Company*, Tom Henry's look at British Columbia's Union Steamships Line. David Sobel and Susan Meurer are both elegiac and hard-edged in *Working at Inglis*. Inglis is — was — a Toronto factory. Even as Sobel and Meurer celebrate the working people who made it run, they raise probing questions about where all Canada's industrial jobs have been going and who pays the price.

A couple of local histories seemed to me to pack special impact. British Columbia writer Terry Glavin has recently launched a book series called "Transmontanus," devoted to the relationship between people and landscape west of the Rockies, and he contributed the first book in the series, *A Ghost in the Water*. Glavin, who is emerging as a powerful West Coast voice, takes the ancient sturgeon of the Fraser River as his subject, and in barely 60 pages combines history, native lore, economics, ecology, and fine writing in an essay that sets a high standard for his new series. The only thing like it, in fact, was Sid Marty's big book *Leaning on the Wind*, in which Marty makes the Chinook winds of the other slope of the Rockies the organizing theme for an exploration of Alberta mountain history, land, and lore. We admired that one enough to put it on the G-G shortlist.

Somehow, *By the Labour of Their Hands: The Story of Ontario Cheddar Cheese* sounds like local pride and antiquarianism gone



James H. Gray

Author James Gray, left, accepts the Pierrre Berton Award from CNHS board member Joe Clark at a ceremony in Calgary. Several of Gray's books were recently re-issued by Fifth House.

absolutely over the limit. Think again. True, Heather Menzies of Ottawa has pursued stories, secrets, and pictures of old cheesemakers down a hundred county concession roads, and done it nicely too. But in the history of "Ontario's definitive industry" readers may find the economic history of Ontario, writ small and comprehensible. And its political economy too: Menzies shows how cheesemaking artisans were pressured to adopt the tasteless methods of mass-production and conglomerate control. So just as consumers became eager to pay premium prices for foods of unique quality and special taste, Ontario's cheese industry was left with no craft but Kraft.

Those are a sampling of some of the notable history titles I sampled last summer searching for the best Canadian non-fiction. Speaking of prizes, I can't help but note with reflected pride that works and writers profiled in this column have steadily prospered in the awards business. A year ago, I wrote enthusiastically about Hal Kalman's enormous *History of Canadian Architecture*. This year the Canadian Historical Association chose it as the scholarly history of the year.

News of yet another of this year's prizes gave me a special personal pleasure: the decision of Canada's National History Society, publishers of *The Beaver*, to present the Pierre Berton Award to James Gray. I played no part at all in that award. I have never met or spoken to James Gray. But I did grow up in a house where his books — *Booze* and *The Winter Years* among them — were read and admired. Later, when a publisher was trying to decide whether to publish my first book, one of the people consulted for an opinion was Gray. His generous, enthusiastic response was one of the first independent hints that I might have a future in the past. I suspect the Berton Award to James Gray will be welcomed by a great many readers and writers of Canadian history right across the country. And if you have never discovered his books, here is your opportunity. ◆

Two books by Christopher Moore — *Louisbourg Portraits* and *The Loyalists* — are available from The Beaver Book Club.

THE SOCIETY

Workshops at Work

With a little help from Canada's National History Society (CNHS), the Ontario Historical Society (OHS), based in Toronto, organized five workshops at various locations last summer and fall throughout the province. These sessions were either a full day or a half day in length and were designed to assist teachers, youth leaders, parents, museum curators and historical society workers in designing interesting and exciting programs for young people based on their own community and its unique history. Titled "Discovering Your Community", the workshops cover a variety of topics that flowed from the principal one: "Local History: Where to Find it: How to use it."

The concept was originally developed by the OHS in 1984 as a resource book for people working with youth. It proved so popular that it was revised, updated and translated into French in 1992. With no further support funding available for the project, it languished until CNHS came along last year. OHS was able to reactivate the program and complement it by a series of workshops throughout the province.

To date, workshops have been held in Little Current,(on Manitoulin Island) Haileybury, Kirby, Keewatin and Milton, and another is planned for King City in February. More workshops are scheduled for the current year and for 1997. It is anticipated that a total of 18 workshops will be held over the three-year period.

The Ontario Historical Society charges a registration fee of $25 per person to cover the costs of the—substantial!—resource book, handouts, coffee and associated meals. The support provided by CNHS is being used to cover costs such as travel, accommodation and meals of speakers,

Photo Credit: Kenora Daily Miner and News

Cheque Please. *Historical Society representatives got together October 30, 1995 for a workshop in Keewatin, Ontario, one of five organized by the Ontario Historical Society. Above, Laird Rankin, vice-president of Canada's National History Society (left) presents a cheque covering the costs of the workshops to Dorothy Duncan, executive director of OHS. On the right is Randy Jackson, past president of the Lake of the Woods Historical Society which helped plan the event. Over twenty-five people attended the workshop.*

rental and equipment fees and publicity costs.

The support the Society offers is part of its program with provincial historical associations under which up to $5,000 a year for three years will be provided to help the provincial agencies expand an existing program or introduce a new one that helps further the awareness and appreciation of history in the province. The Society launched this program in 1995 with the provincial historical associations in B.C., Manitoba, the Yukon, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland. It will be expanded to include the remaining provinces over the next two years.

Prizes Put to Good Use

A cash prize of $5,000 is part of the prize structure associated with the Pierre Berton Award. The annual award was introduced by the Society in 1995 to recognize distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. The cash component is to be used to support a "history project or organization in which the recipient may or may not be involved."

The award was presented to Pierre Berton in 1995 and James H. Gray in 1996. Both historians have used the money to further Canadian history. In Mr. Berton's case, the money has been applied against research costs associated with two books that are scheduled for publication this fall and next year. Mr. Gray has used a portion of his prize to provide history books by Alberta authors to libraries in the province. The remainder of the money is being used, at his suggestion, to provide complimentary one-year subscriptions to **The Beaver** to all Canadian Studies programs at Canadian colleges and universities.

Indexing The Beaver

A professionally produced, comprehensive index to **The Beaver** magazine should be completed by the end of the year.

The magazine has not been without an index since it was established in 1920. In fact it has a number of them. And therein lies the chief problem. The indexes extant have been sporadically produced and deficient and inconsistent in a variety of ways. They will be replaced by a two-part solution: an index mechanically generated by the Canadian Periodical Index for 1986 to 1995, with annual updates acquired regularly; and, a manually produced index, consistent with CPI standards, for **The Beaver** from 1920 to 1985. The result will provide efficient, easy access to the myriad contents of the magazine produced over its last seventy-five years.

Consideration is also being given to making the index available to interested parties and the related costs and formats that would be involved.

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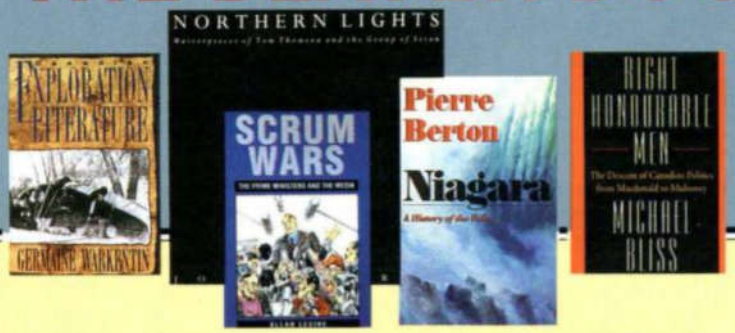

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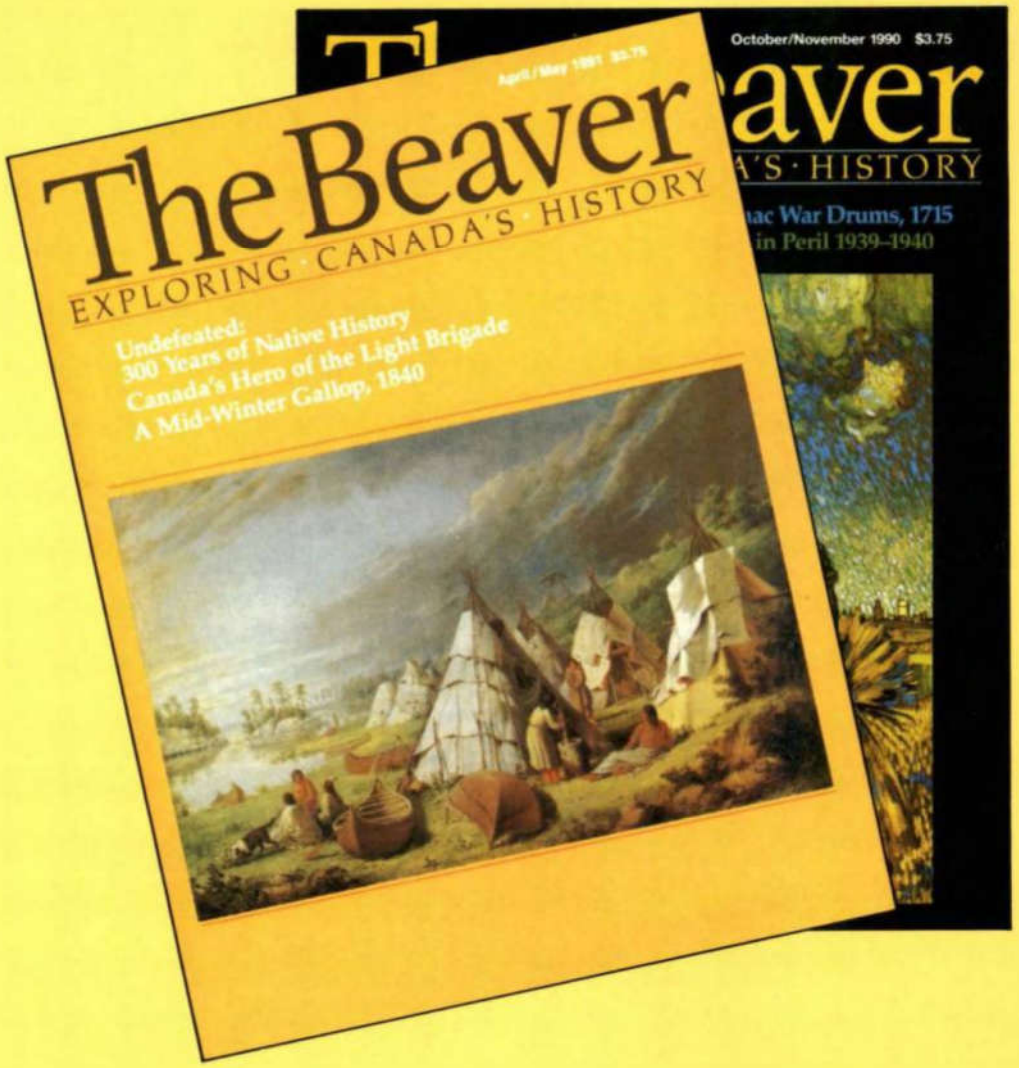

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